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ABSTRACT

Seven papers from the annual conference are presented. "Developing Tomorrow's Technology-Using Foreign Language Teachers: Where We Are, Where We Are Going" (Marjorie H. DeWert, Audrey Heining-Boynton) looks at whether language teachers are being trained to take full advantage of educational technology. "Foreign Language Placement in Postsecondary Institutions: Addressing the Problem" (Leona LeBlanc, Carolyn G. Lally) looks at student placement based on secondary school experience and related articulation issues. "Pedagogy and the Emerging Spanish Canon" (Sheri Spaine Long) focuses on integration of contemporary literary materials in language curricula. "A French Culture Course in English: Strategies and Resources" (Alice J. Strange) proposes encouraging students to embrace French culture by de-emphasizing language. "A Task-Based Communicative Approach in FLES" (Yoshihiro Tajima, Hiroko Spees), describes techniques in an elementary school program. "'Vive le francais': Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Students in French Classes" (Ellen Lorraine Friedrich, Lollie Barbare Eykyn, Barbara Owens McKeithan) discusses the strong role that French can play in general education, and methods for increasing student interest. "Small World Language and Culture for Children: FLEX and the New Standards" (Charlotte Blackmon, Lorene Pagcaliwagan) describes a successful K-3 foreign language exploratory program. (MSE)

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SCOLT

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE TEACHING

DIMENSION '97

Addressing the Standards for Foreign Language Learning

Marjorie H. DeWert
Audrey Heining-Boynton
Leona LeBlanc
Carolyn G. Lally
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Lorene Pagcaliwagan

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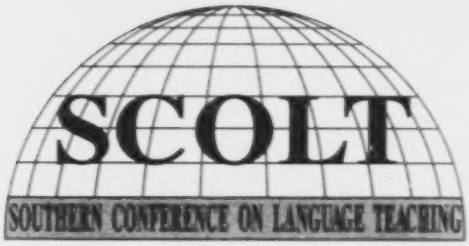

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Review and Acceptance Procedures
SCOLT *Dimension*

The procedures through which articles are reviewed and accepted for publication in the proceedings volume of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) actually begin with the submission of a proposal, including an abstract, to present a session at the SCOLT Annual Conference. Once the proposal is received, it is read by members of the Program Committee.

After sessions have been accepted, presenters are contacted by the Editor and invited to submit an abstract of an article based on their presentation for consideration for publication in *Dimension*, the annual volume of conference proceedings. Only those persons who participated, in person, in the annual Joint Conference may be included in the volume of Conference Proceedings.

Copies of the publication guidelines are sent to the presenters whose abstracts are deemed appropriate for publication in the annual volume. Prospective authors submit five copies of the manuscript. The articles are then sent, with the with all indications of the authors' names and affiliations removed, to the nationally prominent SCOLT Editorial Board, and each article is reviewed by at least three of these specialists. Normally, articles are sent to reviewers who have expertise in the area with which the article deals. The reviewers are asked to make one of three recommendations: (1) publish as is, (2) publish after rewriting, or (3) do not publish.

Once these recommendations are received by the Editor, he reads each article and makes the final decision whether or not to publish it. As a result of these procedures, at least three individuals decide whether or not to include the oral presentation in the Annual Meeting and then four additional people read and approve the presenter's article before it is selected to appear in *Dimension*.

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Introduction

The theme of the 1997 SCOLT Annual Meeting that was held jointly with the South Carolina Foreign Language Teachers' Association in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, was "Addressing the Standards for Foreign Language Learning." Since 1995, the foreign language profession has seen the appearance of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*, a collaborative product of intense work by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP).

Unfortunately, concomitant with the release of the Standards in Anaheim, California, at the 1995 ACTFL Annual Meeting, we have seen the decline of enrollment in several heretofore heavily populated (more popular?) languages, notably French and German. On the one hand, we welcomed the new Standards which, although not mandated by the federal government, clearly showed us the path toward the future and toward quality foreign language education in the United States. On the other hand, we begrudgingly acknowledged the decline in enrollment in several major world languages.

While there is still an extraordinary interest in foreign languages, we are perplexed at the extraordinary upswing in Spanish enrollments and the decline of interest in other major (albeit often less commonly taught) languages. Attendance at the 1997 joint SCOLT/SCFLTA Annual Meeting in Myrtle Beach, SC, attests to this keen interest in *all* foreign languages. We had over 700 people in attendance. Sessions and pre-conference workshops were well-attended. Why?

Teachers readily recognize the need for continuous in-service training and the invigoration that comes from attendance at professional meetings. The sacrifices that many are forced to make in order to participate in the renewing of enthusiasm, in the exposure to innovations in foreign language education, in the benefits of simple networking and sharing among like-minded colleagues, far outweigh the inconveniences of arranging for substitute teachers and the sacrificing of daily income for the long-term investment in one's own career and future.

This year's joint SCOLT/SCFLTA Annual Meeting offered conference attendees a wealth and variety of topics of both theoretical and practical interest to them as teachers of foreign languages. Similarly, this year's annual volume of *Dimension* strives to offer its

readers that same variety of topics. The seven different chapters of this book underline the interest in and concern over (1) the role that technology can and will play in teacher training and foreign language education in the future, (2) the problems posed by placement testing in admitting students into different levels of foreign language study in postsecondary institutions, (3) the place of contemporary literature in today's classrooms, (4) how to address declining enrollment in French courses, especially at the college/university level, (5) task-based communicative approaches in foreign language at the elementary school (FLES) level, and (6) the Standards and FLEX (foreign language exploratory) courses.

In "Developing Tomorrow's Technology-Using Foreign Language Teachers: Where We Are, Where We Are Going," Marjorie H. DeWert and Audrey Heining-Boynton acknowledge the recent interest in the role and use of technology in today's foreign language classrooms. On the one hand, technology can facilitate changes in teaching approaches, curriculum resources, and assessment that are sorely needed to enhance foreign language education. On the other hand, we must ask ourselves if, in fact, teacher educators are preparing tomorrow's teachers to take full advantage of the potential of technology. The authors offer suggestions for four things that must occur in teacher education to address our current technology dilemma.

In "Foreign Language Placement in Postsecondary Institutions: Addressing the Problem," Leona LeBlanc and Carolyn G. Lally, tackle the thorny problem of the placement of students who are trying to determine the most appropriate level at which they should enroll based on their secondary school experience, and of faculty who are trying to place these students as accurately as possible. Vertical articulation (i.e., articulation between secondary and postsecondary foreign language education) has been a major issue for years as we have tried to assure that students have a relatively seamless, coherent experience in their study of another language. LeBlanc and Lally talk about placement examinations, focusing on placement procedures in the state of Florida. This 1996 study is a follow-up to a 1995 pilot study that examines the efficacy and accuracy of placement using the ACT placement examinations, coupled with the evaluation in-house writing samples.

In chapter 3, Sheri Spaine Long concentrates on the teaching of literature in her article, "Pedagogy and the Emerging Spanish Canon." Long is concerned with the integration of up-to-date literary materials into our foreign language classes as our students gain an understanding about life in certain target-language countries through the study of a foreign language and its literature. Her primary question is "Which literary products can be considered the 'canons' of contemporary literature that can shed light the dynamic changes that occur in a given target-language country?" Long focuses on Spanish literature in post-Franco Spain. It is always difficult to see the canonical forest for all of the trees in the literature of any given country. Long illustrates her own particular method for trying to determine peninsular Spanish canonical literature.

In "A French Culture Course in English: Strategies and Resources," Alice J. Strange talks about a particular way to encourage (entice?) students into enrolling in foreign language courses, even if those courses are not taught in the target language. Heresy, you say? Of course not, for it is the purpose of the course and the motivation for enrollment that are important. Strange talks about her own course that offers students a detailed study of French culture and that makes no claim at developing competence in the French language. The omnipresence of culture in every aspect of foreign language study is, after all, the overarching theme of *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*.

Yoshihiro Tajima and Hiroko Speese, the authors of "A Task-Based Communicative Approach in FLES," discuss a variety of tasks that are effective in foreign language teaching. They then describe the FLES programs in Lexington (SC) School District One, which offers courses in French, Spanish, or Japanese using the Natural Approach coupled with the use of task-based instruction through Communicative Language Teaching. They have modified the tasks so that they are relevant to elementary school students. They then illustrate these age-appropriate tasks in their article.

In Chapter 6, Friedrich, Eykyn, and McKeithan talk about methods for attracting students to and keeping them in French courses in "*Vive le français:* Strategies for Recruiting and Retraining Students in French Classes." The authors talk about the current status of the study of French in the United States and then show the strong role that

French can and does play in general education. They discuss and analyze the long-standing myth that Spanish is a much easier language than French. They then offer many suggestions how we can attract students to the study of French — and more importantly, retain them in our classes.

In the final chapter of this volume, "Small World Language and Culture for Children: FLEX and the New Standards," Charlotte Blackmon and Lorene Pagcaliwagan describe a very successful K-3 FLEX program that has been offered in an Alabama school system for the past four years. They also discuss how such a program can be based on the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* in philosophy, objectives, and methodology and what can be the expected outcomes from such a program.

Acknowledgments

As Editor of *Dimension* for the past seven years, I have tried to help this volume grow and develop and take its place among the outstanding publications of other regional foreign language organizations. My contribution has been minimal, for it is the quality of the articles I have received from presenters at the SCOLT Annual Meetings, assured by the thoroughness of the Program Committee, the outstanding members of the Editorial Board who have selflessly read and commented on all of the manuscripts, and the expertise of Lee Bradley who has gotten the manuscripts I have sent him into final shape for publication.

This year, I have had the assistance of a student who has worked with me throughout the development and production of *Dimension '97*, David Luca. It is exciting to see someone who had a very limited knowledge of foreign language education "catch fire" and become excited by being involved literally from the ground up. It is so rewarding to be able to count on the capabilities of an able student and to know that he approached his work with all seriousness. Thank you, David, for your invaluable contributions from behind the scenes.

To those members of the 1997 SCOLT Editorial Board, I would like to extend my warmest and deepest thanks for their total interest and professionalism in carefully and thoroughly evaluating each of the manuscripts we received, offering invaluable suggestions for correc-

tions and improvements, even if the article was not deemed of the caliber to appear in the book. Such a dedication to the betterment of the profession attests even more to their consummate professionalism.

To Lee Bradley, Executive Director of SCOLT, I offer my warmest thanks for his thoroughness, care, and concern in producing a quality publication that bears the name of the organization, whether his involvement has been in reviewing manuscripts or in preparing photo-ready copy for printing. He works with each and every volume from inception to production. I would particularly like to recognize the invaluable contributions of Valdosta State University in helping *Dimension* become a top-quality publication through its generosity and interest in foreign language education.

— Robert M. Terry
Editor, *Dimension '97*

1

Developing Tomorrow's Technology-Using Foreign Language Teachers: Where We Are, Where We Are Going

Marjorie H. DeWert
Audrey Heining-Boynton
University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

During the past five years, our professional literature has exploded with articles and references dealing with the use of technology in the foreign language classroom. Workshops and professional meetings dedicate themselves to the latest in interactive multimedia, telecommunications, and distance learning. We continue to add vocabulary words and acronyms such as HTML, WWW, and URL to our newest foreign language.

Technology has significant potential to facilitate the changes in teaching approaches, curriculum resources, and assessment needed to enhance language learning for both children and adults. Articles and teachers' guides describe a wide variety of ways in which foreign language teachers are using technology for teaching and learning (Abrate 1995; Armstrong and Yetter-Vassot 1994; Hoffman 1995; Lyman-Hager 1995; Johnston and Milne 1995; Mangiafico 1996; Masters-Wicks, Postlewate, and Lewental 1996; Nagata and Swisher 1995; Otto and Pusack 1995; Oliva and Pollastrini 1995; Smith 1990). However, we as teacher educators must ask ourselves whether or not we are preparing tomorrow's foreign language teachers to take full advantage of technology's potential.

Are our pre-service foreign language teachers knowledgeable about how technology can and should be used to enhance language learning, comfortable with using a variety of technologies, and able to make flexible and creative uses of technology to create high-quality language learning environments for their students? Unfortunately, national surveys indicate that most beginning teachers enter the classroom unprepared to harness the power of technology for teaching and learning (Office of Technology Assessment 1995). Willis et al. (1994:3) summarize their extensive review of the literature on technology and teacher education in one sentence, "Teacher education, particularly pre-service, is not preparing educators to work in a technology-enriched classroom."

There is a pressing need to substantially increase the amount and quality of preparation that pre-service teachers receive on using technology for teaching and learning. However, teacher educators wishing to address this challenge must first confront a number of basic questions. What should prospective teachers know and be able to do with technology? What do they know and what can they do? And, because teachers' beliefs about and experiences with technology affect their use of technology for teaching and learning, what beliefs and experiences do prospective teachers bring with them when they enter a professional education program?

The purpose of this article is to explore the above questions. After a brief overview of technology use in K-12 schools, this article will report on how K-12 foreign language teachers and students are using technology in today's leading-edge classrooms. Next, new national and state standards for what prospective teachers should know and be able to do with technology are examined. Finally, after presenting research on the "technology literacy" of pre-service teachers in general and pre-service foreign language in particular, recommendations will be offered on what teacher preparation programs should be doing to ensure that tomorrow's foreign language teachers are "technology-ready" when they begin their first teaching assignments.

Technology Use in K-12 Schools

Computer networks and telecommunications, camcorders and VCRs, CD-ROM and videodisc players are proliferating in today's K-12 schools. A recent report by the US Office of Technology Assessment (OTA 1995) estimates that approximately 5.8 million computers are available for instruction, that is, about one for every nine students. It has been reported that 700,000 computers per year have been added to K-12 schools for the past three years. A fall 1996 survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics found that 65% of all public schools in the US now have

access to the Internet compared to only 35% in 1994 (National Center for Education Statistics 1996).

Nevertheless, the OTA reports numerous barriers to using technology to its capacity. For example, only 9% of secondary students reported using computers for English class, 6-7% for mathematics, and 3% for social studies. No figures surfaced for foreign language usage. One of the barriers to usage include the fact that schools may be insufficiently stocked, powered, or wired. Another is that approximately one-half of the computers are older models incapable of running advanced applications such as interactive multimedia and World Wide Web browsers. Yet another difficulty in incorporating technology is an overall lack of description and articulation of the goals of technology in the schools. However, according to the OTA, the biggest barrier to technology use is time for teachers to learn how to use the technology as well as how to integrate it effectively into the curriculum.

O'Neil (1995) maintains that one of the mistakes we made when we began to integrate technology into the schools was to focus first on the students and not the teachers. New equipment can be intimidating for teachers who are unfamiliar with it, and even if they do possess the necessary technical expertise, teachers need additional assistance to understand and use technology to facilitate the changes in teaching approaches, curriculum materials and resources, and assessment emerging from the research and education reform literature (Means et al. 1995, Knapp and Glenn 1996). These changes include authentic problem-based learning in an information-rich, tool-rich environment, collaborative learning, interdisciplinary instruction, thinking skills development, and performance-based assessment.

Technology Use in K-12 Foreign Language Classrooms

Despite the barriers to technology use cited in the OTA report, a quick tour of today's leading-edge foreign language classrooms indicates that teachers are using technology in flexible and creative ways to enhance second language teaching and learning. As technology-using high school French teacher Juliette Avots (1993, 84) insightfully comments, "We do not need to change what we teach. We need to change how we teach."

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, upper elementary students in Harlem created "Mundo Hispano"—a Web-based multimedia encyclopedia on Hispanic culture. Children and adults from around the world were invited to share their writing, experiences, opinions, and questions regarding the Hispanic world via the World Wide Web. Students posted writings about topics in Hispanic culture, learned about Hispanic customs and traditions via on-line discussions, and shared favorite Spanish expressions. They also

created an on-line Spanish alphabet book, complete with original artwork and writing, for a kindergarten class in Portland, Oregon (Ralph Bunche School 1997).

At Yujin Gakuen, a public, elementary-level Japanese language immersion school in Eugene, Oregon, technology is integrated throughout the curriculum. First-grade students journey to Japan via the Internet to learn about Japanese culture including the currency system, the effects of natural disasters, and Japanese cuisine. Third- and fourth-grade students work in cooperative learning groups to conduct inquiry projects and present their findings via bilingual multimedia reports. Throughout the year, students exchange letters, artwork, videos, and their multimedia projects with several sister schools around the world via the World Wide Web (Ketterer and Giannone 1996).

Thanksgiving and el Dia de los Muertos (the Mexican celebration for All Soul's Day) are just two of the traditions shared via E-mail by students from East Lake High School in Tarpon Springs, Florida, and students from Escuela Nacional Preparatoria No. 6 in Mexico City. Students learn to express their ideas in the target language and increase their cultural awareness and understanding by discussing and comparing similarities and differences in their respective cultures. More advanced students discuss critical issues such as the revolt in Chiapas (Silva et al. 1996).

In Pittsboro, North Carolina, high school students use système-D, a writing assistance program, to enhance their ability to communicate in written French. They conduct inquiry projects on countries where French is spoken by accessing a variety of non-print information resources including the World Wide Web, CD-ROMs, and videodiscs. They then demonstrate what they have learned by creating and presenting interactive multimedia reports in the target language. In "Let's Visit the Louvre," students practice using phrases and sentences to describe works from the collection displayed at the museum's Web site (Hopgood 1997).

In an advanced placement Spanish literature class in Texas, high school students read the original works of Federico Garcia Lorca, Miguel de Unamuno, Ana Maria Matute, Jorge Luis Borges, and Gabriel Garcia Márquez. The students communicate with a professor in Spain who comments on their ideas and on the cultural, literary, and historical context of the works they are reading. The students' teacher and the professor also share instructional ideas, resources, and perspectives about the works being read (Harris 1996).

New Standards, Higher Stakes

To succeed in the technology-rich foreign language learning environments described above, prospective teachers will need new knowledge and skills. Fortunately, expectations for what prospective teachers should know and be able to do with technology have been raised at both the national and state level in recent years. According to accreditation standards approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 1995, prospective teachers are now expected to "develop understanding and use of educational technology, including the use of the computer and other technologies in instruction, assessment, and professional productivity." The new NCATE unit standard for Content Studies for Initial Teacher Preparation states that teacher candidates should "complete a sequence of courses and/or experiences to develop an understanding of the structure, skills, core concepts, ideas, values, facts, methods of inquiry and uses of technology for the content they plan to teach." Similarly, the new unit standard for Professional and Pedagogical Studies states that professional studies for all teacher candidates should include knowledge and experiences with "the impact of technological and societal changes on schools," "effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communications for fostering active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interactions in the classroom," and with "educational technology, including the use of computer and related technologies in instruction, assessment, and professional productivity."

In 1991, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) published a set of "foundation standards" for computer literacy. Revised in 1996, these standards have been approved by NCATE for use in the accreditation process for schools, colleges, and departments of education. The knowledge, skills, and dispositions described in the ISTE/NCATE guidelines are considered to be fundamental for all teachers, not just those who teach computer science or computer literacy courses. According to the guidelines (see Appendix A), all candidates seeking initial endorsements in teacher preparation require foundations in Basic Technology Operations and Concepts, Professional and Personal Use of Technology, and Application of Technology in Instruction.

In 1996, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved rigorous new technology competencies for all educators (see Appendix B). The Board of Education also mandated that all prospective teachers pass a "technology assessment" demonstrating mastery of both basic and advanced competencies before they will be eligible for an initial teaching license in North Carolina.

Technology Literacy of Pre-Service Teachers

Although national and state standards are driving the consensus on what pre-service teachers should know and be able to do with technology, surprisingly little is known about the knowledge, skills, experiences, and beliefs of pre-service teachers in general and K-12 foreign language pre-service teachers in particular. Studies by DeWert (1995), Delcourt and Kinzie (1993), and Scheffield (1994) indicate that, with the exception of basic skills in computer operations, word processing, and E-mail, pre-service teachers are not "technology literate."

Even more disturbing, DeWert and Davis (1996) found that pre-service teachers have not had the experiences they need to construct their own "mental models" of how technology can and should be used to support teaching and learning. When asked how their K-12 teachers used technology to facilitate teaching and learning, students indicated that most practicing teachers still use technology in traditional ways, if at all. The use of video and overhead projectors for presenting information was the most common technology application reported. What little experience students had with computer technology during their K-12 education was limited to three areas: the use of word processing and desktop publishing software, occasionally for writing assignments in English classes but mostly for work on the school newspaper, the use of games and simulations as a reward for completing work early, and direct instruction on programming languages as part of a mathematics or computer literacy course. In all but a few instances, students used computers in laboratory settings rather than as integrated tools in regular classroom settings.

DeWert and Davis (1996) also found that students' experiences with computers and related technologies expanded only slightly at the university. While 92% of the students stated that they used computers at least twice a month, most acknowledged that their "computer use" was limited to wordprocessing and E-mail. Students rarely observed university faculty using technology for instructional purposes. One student mentioned a freshman composition instructor who took the class to the library for a lesson on how to use the on-line catalogue. Another student described a mathematics professor who used a 3-D modeling program to illustrate mathematical equations. Only one student had been "inspired" by a history professor's use of hypermedia to present maps, artifacts, photographs, and lecture notes.

How do the technology-related knowledge, skills, experiences, and beliefs of pre-service foreign language teachers compare to those of pre-service teachers in general? A re-analysis of the data from DeWert and Davis (1996) revealed no significant differences in knowledge or skill level between

the 18 pre-service foreign language teachers and the 125 other pre-service teachers included in the original sample. Of the competencies deemed "essential" by the North Carolina State Board of Education (1996), the "typical" pre-service foreign language teacher has mastered 61% of basic computer operations, 67% of word processing, 39% of telecommunications, 25% of maintenance and troubleshooting, 6.25% of database, 5.8% of media communications and multimedia integration, and 5.5% of the spreadsheet competencies.

The technology-related experiences of pre-service foreign language teachers, like those of pre-service teachers in general, were limited. Only two of the pre-service foreign language teachers reported using technology in a foreign language class in high school and only one had used technology in a foreign language course at the university. In all three cases, the "technology" used was drill-and-practice software on Spanish grammar and vocabulary.

In light of their limited experiences, it is not surprising that many pre-service foreign language teachers lack the mental models needed to think about technology in creative and productive ways. One student commented, "I don't know enough about technology to even begin to imagine how I would use it in my classroom." A second student flatly stated, "Since Spanish needs so much speaking, reading, writing, and listening, computer technology will not play a major role in my classroom."

Nearly a third of the pre-service foreign language teachers expressed concerns about the impact of technology on K-12 curriculum. As one student commented, "My main concern with the increasing use of computers in the schools is the de-emphasizing of the arts, including music and foreign languages. In many school systems, these programs are being cut to make way for more computers and more classes in computer technology. I want to teach Spanish but am getting a little bit wary of its future, especially in elementary schools." Another said, "Many school systems don't even have enough money to keep Spanish teachers in the elementary schools, so I wonder how many subjects might be cut from the curriculum to make room and money for technology."

Conclusions: Where Do We Go From Here?

What must teacher preparation programs do to ensure that all beginning foreign language teachers possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to think about and use technology to enhance language learning for all children? Commenting on the challenge of preparing teachers to use technology wisely and well, Sheingold (1992) states: "The scope of the problem is large and disturbing. Like so many other problems in education, it raises the

questions about where and how to begin. How do we help teachers to teach in ways they were not taught, to create classrooms unlike the ones they studied in, and to develop confidence that they are doing the right thing for their students?" (p. 41).

Our experiences in grappling with these questions over the past two years, suggest that at least four things must occur. First, it is essential that pre-service students develop basic technology skills, preferably before being admitted to professional education programs. Second, teacher education and foreign language faculty members must work together to ensure that content courses incorporate the appropriate and effective use of technology for the teaching and learning of languages. Third, technology must be infused not only into foreign language methods courses but into all professional education courses as well. Fourth and finally, pre-service teachers need to observe and use technology in their field experiences and student teaching.

Helping pre-service K-12 foreign language teachers effectively incorporate technologies into the teaching and learning process is one of the most important steps we as teacher educators can take to make the most of past and continuing investments in educational technology. Foreign language teacher preparation programs must empower pre-service teachers to construct and then act on new understandings about the constructivist nature of learning, the facilitative role of teachers, and the empowering influence of technology on teaching, learning, and assessment. Pre-service foreign language teachers must be provided with multiple models of effective technology use, opportunities to learn essential technical knowledge and skills, and, most importantly, repeated opportunities to apply knowledge, skills, and strategies in authentic school settings. Only then will tomorrow's teachers of foreign languages be "informed and fearless in their use of new technologies" (OTA 1995). And, only then, will we achieve the ultimate goal of enabling our children to develop the ability to communicate directly and effectively with people from other cultures who speak other languages.

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Appendix A

International Society for Technology in Education
Foundation Standards for Computer/Technology Literacy

The following standards have been reviewed and approved by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). All candidates seeking initial endorsements in teacher preparation programs require foundations in (1.1) Basic Technology Operations and Concepts, (1.2) Professional and Personal Use of Technology and (1.3) Application of Technology in Instruction.

1.1 Basic Technology Operations and Concepts

Candidates will use computer operating systems and user interfaces to run programs, access, generate and manipulate data, and to publish results. They will also evaluate performance of hardware and software components of computer systems and apply basic troubleshooting strategies as needed.

Performance Indicators. Candidates will

1.1.1 operate a multimedia computer system with related peripheral devices to successfully install and use a variety of software packages.
1.1.2 use terminology related to computers and technology appropriately in written and oral communications.
1.1.3 describe and implement basic troubleshooting techniques related to using a multimedia system with related peripheral devices.
1.1.4 use imaging devices such as scanners, digital cameras, and/or video cameras with computers systems and software.
1.1.5 demonstrate knowledge of uses of computers and technology in business, industry, and society.

1.2 Using Technology to Enhance Professional Growth and Productivity

Candidates will apply tools for enhancing their own professional growth and productivity. They will use technology in communicating, collaborating, conducting research, and solving problems. In addition, they will plan and participate in activities that encourage lifelong learning and promote equitable, ethical, and legal use of computer/technology resources.

Performance Indicators. Candidates will

1.2.1 use productivity tools for work processing, database management, and spreadsheet applications.

1.2.2 apply productivity tools for creating basic multimedia presentations.

1.2.3 use computer-based technologies including telecommunications to access information and enhance personal and professional productivity.

1.2.4 use computers to support problem-solving, data collection, information management, communications, presentations, and decision-making.

1.2.5 demonstrate awareness of resources for adaptive/assistive devices for students with special needs.

1.2.6 demonstrate knowledge of equity, ethics, legal, and human issues concerning use of computers and technology.

1.2.7 identify computer and related technology resources for facilitating lifelong learning and emerging roles of the learner and educator.

1.2.8 observe demonstrations or uses of broadcast instruction, audio/video conferencing, and other distance learning applications.

1.3 Using Technology to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Candidates will apply computers and related technologies to support teaching and learning in their grade level and subject areas. They must plan and deliver instructional units that integrate a variety of software, applications, and learning tools. Lessons developed must reflect effective grouping and assessment strategies for diverse populations.

Performance Indicators. Candidates will

1.3.1 explore, evaluate, and use computer/technology resources including applications, tools, educational software and associated documentation.

1.3.2 describe current instructional principles, research, and appropriate assessment practices as related to the use of computers and technology resources in the curriculum.

1.3.3 design, deliver, and assess student learning activities that integrate computers/technology for a variety of student grouping strategies and for diverse student populations.

1.3.4 design student learning activities that foster equitable, ethical, and legal use of technology by students

1.3.5 practice responsible, ethical and legal use of technology, information, and software resources

Appendix B

Technology Competencies for All North Carolina Educators

In March 1996, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved the following revised basic and advanced technology competencies for all educators. The Board mandated that all prospective teachers pass a "technology assessment," demonstrating mastery of both basic and advanced competencies before they will be eligible for an initial teaching license.

BASIC TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCIES

1.0 Basic Computer Operations and Concepts

- Start up and shut down computer system and peripherals
- Point, click, double-click, click and drag with mouse
- Select, open, and move icons
- Use pull-down and pop-up menus
- Select, open, move, resize and close a window
- Scroll up/down, left/right within a window
- Make a window active/inactive
- Start an application and create a document
- Name, save, retrieve, revise, rename a document
- Preview a document before printing to see how it will look when printed
- Use print options (e.g., number of copies, page range, print quality)
- Insert and eject floppy disk and CD-ROM
- Initialize, name/rename floppy disk and hard disk
- Copy document from hard disk to floppy disk and vice versa
- Create and name/rename subdirectories/folders
- Save, open, place, retrieve documents within subdirectories/ folders
- Open and work with more than one application at a time
- Describe special operating system features for people with disabilities

- Use the following terms appropriately in written and oral communications: graphical user interface, icon, window, document, application, K (kilobyte), hierarchical file system, directory, operating system, system software, RAM

2.0 Setup, Maintenance, and Troubleshooting

- Setup a computer system and connect peripheral devices
- Protect and care for floppy disks
- Clean computer components and printer
- Make backup copies of key applications and documents
- Use self-help resources (electronic and print) to diagnose and correct common hardware, software, and printing problems
- Describe how to guard against computer viruses
- Install/upgrade an application

3.0 Word Processing/Desktop Publishing

- Enter and edit text
- Copy and move blocks of text
- Change font (typeface) and font size
- Change text alignment, margins, and line spacing
- Set and use tab stops
- Review or change text and special characters using find and/or replace commands
- Use writing tools (e.g., spelling checker, thesaurus, grammar check, word count)
- Create a header or footer in a document
- Insert date, time, page number in a document
- Add columns to document
- Insert clip art into document
- Use the following terms appropriately in written and oral communications: cursor, format, font, style, header, footer, spelling checker

4.0 Spreadsheet/Graphing

- Interpret and communicate information in an existing spreadsheet
- Enter/edit data in an existing spreadsheet to solve a problem
- Create a spreadsheet with rows, columns, labels and values
- Add/delete rows and columns in a spreadsheet
- Change column width and row height
- Format a cell or range of cells for the following: currency, date, time, percentage, fixed decimal
- Create a formula using a formula indicator symbol, cell references, and operations symbols (+ - * /)

- Create a formula using functions (SUM and AVERAGE) and a range of cells
- Copy values using fill down and fill across
- Create and print a graph from spreadsheet data
- Insert a spreadsheet into a word processing document
- Use the following terms appropriately in written and oral communications: spreadsheet, data entry bar, cell, label, value, formula, function, graph

5.0 Database

- Browse through an existing database to find information
- Add/delete records in an existing database
- Enter/edit data in an existing database
- Search an existing database for specific information using "and", "or", or "not" connectors
- Sort a database by specific fields to solve a problem
- Create database with multiple fields and records
- Create a database report with calculated summaries
- Create and print customized reports including columnar reports and labels
- Insert database fields into word processing document (mail merge)
- Use the following terms appropriately in written and oral communications: database, field, record, layout, sort/arrange, search/select/filter, mail merge

6.0 Local Area Networks

- Use a file server (e.g., connect/log on, retrieve a program or document, save a document to a specified location on a file server)
- Share files with others on a network
- Use the following terms appropriately in written and oral communications: local area network, wide area network, access rights, security passwords, file server

7.0 Telecommunications

- Compose and send E-mail to individuals and groups
- Retrieve and read E-mail
- Reply to sender and forward E-mail
- Save, print, and delete E-mail
- Use services such as telnet and ftp to find and get information from a remote computer
- Use services such as listservs, newsgroups, chat to communicate with others

- Use a Web browser to navigate through the World Wide Web
- Access a specific web site by entering the appropriate Universal Resource Locator address
- Use Web search engines to find information on specific topics
- Create hotlists (bookmarks) of useful Web sites
- Use filters (software driven, server based, search engine inclusive)
- Use the following terms appropriately in written and oral communications: telecommunications, direct access, dial-in access, modem, baud rate, Internet, World Wide Web, browser, hypertext, web site, home page, URL, search engine, filter

8.0 Media Communications

- Produce print-based products (e g , newsletters, brochures, posters, books) that meet criteria for effective communication
- Produce electronic slides/overheads) that meet criteria for effective communication
- Set up and operate a videocassette recorder/players and monitor/TV
- Setup and use an LCD panel and overhead projector or LCD projector to display computer output on a large screen

9. 0 Multimedia Integration

- Use a linear multimedia presentation
- Use a non-linear, hypermedia presentation
- Use the following terms appropriately in written and oral communications: media, multimedia, hypermedia, clip media

Advanced Technology Competencies

10.0 Curriculum

- Use the NC Computer Skills Curriculum to identify what students should know and be able to do at a given grade level
- Use school television resources that support curriculum
- Access resources for planning instruction available via telecommunications (e g , experts, lesson plans, authentic data, curriculum materials)
- Locate, evaluate, and select appropriate teaching/learning resources and curriculum materials for the content area and target audience, including computer-based products, videotapes and discs, school television, local experts, primary documents and artifacts, texts, reference books, literature, and other print sources

11.0 Subject-Specific Knowledge

- Use technology in the discipline/subject for teaching and learning as well as a medium for communication
- Use media and technology present the subject so that it is comprehensible to others
- Use technology-based tools that are specific to the discipline
- Use technology to facilitate teaching strategies specific to the discipline

12.0 Design and Management of Learning Environments and Resources

- Develop performance tasks that require students to (a) locate and analyze information as well as draw conclusions and (b) use a variety of media to communicate results clearly
- Use computers and other technologies effectively and appropriate to collect information on student learning using a variety of methods
- Use computers and other technologies effectively and appropriately to communicate information in a variety of formats on students learning to colleagues, parents, and others
- Select and create learning experiences that are appropriate for curriculum goals, relevant to learners, based upon principles of effective teaching and learning, incorporate the use of media and technology for teaching where appropriate, and support learner expression in a variety of media using a variety of media communication tools

13.0 Child Development, Learning, and Diversity

- Use media and technology to address differences in children's learning and performance
- Use media and technology to support learning for children with special needs
- Use media and technology to support learning for children whose primary language is not English
- Use appropriate local, state, and national services or resources to meet diverse learning needs through technology

14.0 Social, Legal, and Ethical Issues

- Establish classroom policies and procedures that ensure compliance with copyright law, fair-use guidelines, security, and child protection
- Ensure equal access to media and technology resources for all students

2

Foreign Language Placement in Postsecondary Institutions: Addressing the Problem

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Introduction

Rare is the foreign language teacher -- at any level of instruction -- who has not wondered how successfully her or his students will proceed from their current coursework into the next class, grade, or even school. The converse is of equal concern. How well prepared are the students each teacher receives? Do the students have the knowledge and skills to perform well at the next level? Have they been properly placed in the "right" course?

The issue with which we, as foreign language educators, grapple is articulation, that is "... the way instructional programs dovetail one with the other" (Long 1996: 513). In our discipline, articulation can be vertical, i.e., elementary to postsecondary, or horizontal, i.e., across grade levels, and is characterized as the successful organization of "... instruction in coherent seamless sequences within programs and across elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education" (Wells 1995: 1). Certainly, articulation is of no small concern to all of us in the profession.

Efforts at articulation take various forms, from the individual teacher's tracking of students who go on to the next level of coursework to state-wide multi-year projects involving dozens of faculty committees meeting in

working groups at many different locations. Gahala (1996, 542-43) sees some common features in these major state-wide projects, two of which are summarized in the next section of this paper, including

- a focus on all languages together,
- a requirement for horizontal as well as vertical efforts,
- a statement of goals in terms of functions, as defined by the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines,
- an outcome defined by learner performance,
- a network among levels of instruction to reach consensus, and
- an emphasis on learner individuality.

None of these aspects of current articulation efforts seems particularly novel. Should we not have resolved the problem of articulation of foreign language instruction decades ago? Are current activities and concerns merely a recycling of old issues? In order to provide an historical context with which to view today's articulation problems, and the various attempts to solve them, the following section of this paper provides a brief overview of our discipline's response to the issue since the 1950s. With this background in mind, we will look at current efforts to provide the "seamless sequences of programs" and place the work of the authors of this article among those efforts.

Background

Serious discussion about articulation of curricula has existed for some time. In the late 1950s, the post-Sputnik era of American education brought many rapid changes in almost all disciplines in the area of curriculum development, teacher training, and expectations for student performances. Foreign languages were not exempt from this overhaul. Course offerings were increased at all levels of instruction, less commonly taught languages —Russian, Chinese, Japanese—were added to the curriculum. Teacher education was expanded. NDEA institutes proliferated by the early 1960s. With instruction heavily influenced by a behaviorist view of language learning, the resultant audio-lingualism was not so much concerned with communication skills as with forming good habits of listening and repeating (Lado 1964).

The increase in numbers of students in many different languages at all levels of instruction caused institutions to begin to look at how students progressed vertically through the foreign language educational sequence (Dufau et al. 1965). The most extensive early work was done at the University of Illinois in the mid-1960s (Spencer and Flaugher 1967, Flaugher

and Spencer 1968). Researchers there concluded that one year of high school language instruction does not equal one semester of college work, that the number of intervening years between secondary and postsecondary study must be taken into account, and that many variables effect placement decisions at the college level. By the late 1960s, respected colleagues in the discipline were recommending the use of national "proficiency" instruments (the MLA Cooperative Tests [1963] were the most frequently chosen) or the development of local "placement exams as a way to solve the articulation problem" (Hagiwara 1968, Walsh 1968).

With the exception of a few general discussions of articulation or testing issues (Halff et al. 1975, 1977, Carroll 1975), the topic of how to move students successfully along the foreign language curriculum received relatively little attention again until the early- to mid-1980s. Second language instruction and learning had begun to take on entirely new dimensions: the use of a functional/notional syllabus (Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983), the use of Krashen's hypotheses (Krashen 1981) on the development of the Natural Approach (Terrell 1986), the development and application of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (Buck, Byrnes, and Thompson 1989), and the all-pervasive notion of communicative competence (Savignon 1983). Given these new constraints, the question of effective articulation was vigorously raised in the 1980s. Hagiwara (1983) studied placement tests for French students while LeBlanc and Painchaud (1985) looked at self-assessment as a placement instrument. Schwartz (1985) reported on articulation issues in the state of California and Klein (1988) investigated the status of the changing curriculum in high school Spanish. Klee and Rogers (1989) presented the most extensive review to date on the status of articulation across the country, presenting survey results concerning the use of placement exams, the recognition of advanced placement course credit, and various articulation strategies then in place.

With the opening of the present decade, the methodological and curricular innovations of the 1980s have come face to face with programmatic, administrative, and financial exigencies to such a degree that the issue of articulation has moved to the forefront once again. On the one hand, faculty and students are frustrated by poor or non-existent articulation mechanisms that result in college classes with mixtures of false beginners and true beginners. On the other hand, administrators and legislators adamantly tell us that ever-shrinking resources are misspent when students take essentially the same courses they have completed in high school. In fact, Schwartz reported that 42 percent of California students with two years of high school language instruction began an introductory course of that same language in college (23). Data collected by LeBlanc and Lally (1997) confirmed these

results for one institution in Florida. In response to this seemingly unwise use of taxpayers' money, some state legislators "have mandated a reduction or elimination of funding for so-called 'remedial' courses and have placed strict limitations on the number of hours that can be counted for a degree" (LeBlanc and Lally, 126-27). Certainly, individual institutions as well as statewide educational systems must respond to these administrative dictates.

Heralded by Heidi Byrnes's challenge to the profession (1990), a number of individual and school efforts at efficient and effective articulation have surfaced in the last few years. At the University of Wisconsin, for example, faculty are working with that state's Department of Public Instruction to develop competency-based admissions (Sandrock 1995). In New York, a task force of teachers has met since 1992 to develop criteria for entry-level skills in foreign languages (Taylor 1995). Instructors at a community college in Ohio are focusing their energies on articulating non-traditional learners into their programs (Latoja 1996). Faculty at the University of South Carolina have developed their own placement instrument, which, in conjunction with other activities of a volunteer coordinating committee (Mosher 1989), is distributed to other institutions around the state and the nation. At Peace College (North Carolina), Fountain has developed a K-12 sequence of Spanish literature to remedy "the absence of literary works as a focal point in articulation" (1996, 539).

Articulation activities in Ohio and Minnesota have had such a wide scope and history of success and have included so many teachers and institutions that they are likely to serve as a prescriptive model for the rest of the country. Ohio faculty involved in the multi-year foreign language articulation program called CAAP (Collaborative Articulation and Assessment Project) have reported on its development, implementation, success, and applications (Birckbichler 1995; Birckbichler et al. 1995; *CAAP Update: Special Issue* 1995; Corl et al. 1996). Public school, community college, and Ohio State University representatives have joined to develop a plan for articulation between secondary and postsecondary Ohio institutions and to create an early-assessment program for high school students to permit them to project their college foreign language placement. Working in a collaborative partnership includes reciprocal visits among institutions, attendance at summer workshops, the development of an articulation agreement, and the creation of an early assessment instrument. Federal funding provided for the initial stages of the project. Ohio State University continues to fund the work at a modest level until additional federal funding provided by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) begins (Corl et al., 118).

Federal funding also supports a major state-wide articulation project in Minnesota, where faculty from all levels of instruction have joined to develop proficiency-based assessment instruments as part of a state-wide adoption of proficiency standards and tests (Metcalf 1995). The proficiency tests, administered during the senior year in high school, encourage students to take the "required" two years of language study in the junior and senior year of high school, thereby solving the problem of intervening years between secondary and postsecondary foreign language instruction. Participants in the Minnesota project are also committed to providing feedback to secondary instructors about the success of students as they proceed through college course work.

Such state-wide efforts as those in Ohio and Minnesota—and to some degree in Wisconsin, South Carolina, and New York—seemingly provide the very model of an articulation program sought by individual faculty and schools throughout the country. These major projects include most of the elements cited by Gahala (542-43) as common features of successful articulation (focus on horizontal as well as vertical articulation, learner performance outcomes, networking among levels of instruction, etc.). In addition, faculty in Ohio and Minnesota are engaged in rigorous research activities to answer many questions concerning the effectiveness of their efforts. Two examples of this research are Lange, Prior, and Sims's study on the relationship between years of high school instruction and success on the University of Minnesota proficiency tests (1992) and Corl et al.'s report of the collaborative, process-oriented approach used in Ohio's CAAP program (1996).

All of us in the profession have much to gain from these state-wide articulation projects, particularly the ones in Ohio and Minnesota. However, those of us teaching in the remainder of the country where foreign language articulation efforts are highly idiosyncratic or non-existent must view the Ohio and Minnesota experiences as ideal programs, coordinated and well-funded at both the state and federal levels. While they inspire us, they cannot solve immediate and pressing needs at the local level. Most schools and individual faculty must deal with the immediate administrative reality: How do we place students who have had previous foreign language instruction into the "correct" college courses? How do we make sure that no one—students, their classmates, instructors, administrators—is wasting time, energy, or money as each student proceeds through a required or elective sequence of foreign language courses? The facet of articulation, then, which is of primary and immediate concern to postsecondary institutions is student placement. The next section of this discussion will focus on placement mechanisms in use at a number of different institutions in several states, including Florida where the present research took place.

Placement Exams as an Articulation Tool

The consistent and well-developed articulation efforts and placement procedures described above are, unfortunately, a rare occurrence. The reality is that most institutions are left to their own devices when it comes to placing incoming foreign language students. In the absence of state-wide interest and federal funding, the most common and economical solution seems to be the implementation of seat-time equivalency standards or some type of national or in-house placement exam. An informal survey reveals that many different placement procedures, tools, and policies are currently being used by institutions across the United States. A sample of these institutions and the various instruments currently in place will illustrate this point.

A number of universities, Mississippi State, Middle Tennessee State, North Carolina, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Vanderbilt, all use the Brigham Young University computerized placement exam for French and Spanish (Vanderbilt does not use any formal type of placement exam for German.) The BYU exam has been in place at UNC for two years, and the university is still in the process of adjusting the cut-off scores.

The BYU exam or CAPE (Computer Adaptive Placement Exams) tests reading, grammar, and vocabulary. There is no speaking or listening comprehension component to the exam, although test developers plan to add a listening comprehension section in the future. The exam time varies depending on the students' ability. The average exam time is 20-25 minutes, and the students receive their score, or placement level, on screen at the end of the exam.

The University of Mississippi offers, but does not require, language placement through the use of the University of Wisconsin exam. The University of Wisconsin exam has a thirty-minute listening comprehension section, and a sixty-minute grammar and reading comprehension section. Ample time is provided because the exams are designed to test skill, not speed. The tests are multiple-choice and, with the exception of the instructions, each test is written entirely in the target language. Reading and listening comprehension passages consist of complete texts taken from authentic sources.

The University of Tennessee at Knoxville takes an eclectic approach to language placement by using the University of North Carolina Exam for Spanish, an in house-exam for French, and the BYU Computer Adaptive Placement Exam for German.

South Carolina's Clemson University is also at present using a different placement tool for each language tested. For example, to place students in German, Clemson uses the exam developed by the American Association of

Teachers of German. For French, Clemson uses an adapted version of the Wisconsin Placement Exam, and to place students of Spanish, Clemson has developed a written in-house exam. In an effort to achieve consistency of placement within institutions and to develop state-wide norms, a team of representatives from universities and high schools in South Carolina has been assembled to create a placement exam that can be used throughout the state. As of this writing, the South Carolina exam is in the design stage. The future South Carolina Placement Exam will not be ready for use until 1998.

Valdosta State University in Georgia is currently not using any type of placement tool. However, the University System of Georgia is also considering the implementation of a state-wide placement instrument and policy. In fact, the academic advisory committee for the state in 1996 began discussion of a state-wide placement policy for the University System.

The University of Alabama uses the ACT, an exam developed at the University of Illinois. Although a large portion of the ACT covers language structure, the test developers have tried to create questions that allow students to demonstrate a successful negotiation of communicative functions. Using authentic and adapted materials, this multiple choice exam tests

- linguistic competence, i.e., knowledge of grammar and vocabulary
- communicative and discourse competence (including knowledge of important phrases used in conversation)
- cultural competence
- reading comprehension

(*ACT Placement Programs Foreign Language User's Guide*, 3-4)

Articulation and Placement in Florida's State University System

One state in which there has been relatively little attention paid to foreign language articulation and placement issues is, surprisingly, Florida. As the state with the fourth largest population, including one and a half million residents who identify themselves as native speakers of Spanish, Florida would seem a likely place for state-wide coordination of the placement of some 250,000 students presently enrolled in K-12 foreign language courses. Of equal concern to planners and administrators of the state's colleges and universities is the predicted 50 percent increase in the number of secondary students by the year 2005 (Reed 1996), with accompanying increases of 100,000 students to the state's nine public universities and an equal addition to the community college population.

Although collaborative efforts among various foreign language constituencies (Florida Foreign Language Association, academic alliances, committees to produce teacher certification exams and foreign language standards) already exist, these established groups have not been able to provide leadership on the questions of articulation and placement. Nor have agencies within the state government, such as the Post-Secondary Planning Commission and legislative committees on higher education, offered initiatives on these issues. There exists at present no consistency in foreign language course requirements or placement procedures among the nine state universities. Recent surveys show that each senior institution has different requirements for foreign language study and different policies about placing incoming high school graduates (Figure 1).

Required foreign language study ranges from no requirement (Florida A&M University and the University of West Florida) to a required sequence of courses through the sophomore level (Florida State University). Likewise, placement procedures vary from institution to institution: two universities give no placement exam, while each one of the remaining seven offers a different instrument testing one or more of the various skills. Lack of consistency among Florida's colleges and universities in regard to placement procedures has led to confusion and mismanaged resources. High school counselors and faculty are unable to help students prepare for the transition to college foreign language studies; students unwittingly often enroll in courses already completed in high school.

In light of the present curricular, administrative, and financial realities in Florida and elsewhere, faculty at one institution, Florida State University, determined that it was time to address the broad articulation issue in terms of placement procedures. Although student placement is only one facet of the articulation problem, Florida State faculty felt that, without outside funding and with no state-directed initiative in place, it was necessary to respond to the immediate need to place incoming students successfully. Further, the faculty felt that any activity involving the administration of a placement exam must be carried out in the context of replicable research. Although the immediate goal was to determine a successful placement procedure for the more than 7,000 students enrolled annually, the larger goal—to communicate with colleagues across the state on how placement is part of an effective articulation program—required a carefully designed and controlled study. Thus, in 1994, the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics at Florida State revised the current placement procedures, reviewed several nationally distributed placement exams (including the ACT, SAT II, and the BYU exam), and designed a pilot study on the use of one of these exams (the ACT) for summer, 1995. A brief summary of the pilot study follows.

Figure 1. Florida State System Foreign Language Placement Exams, Procedures, and Language Requirements (1995-1996)

University	Language Requirement	Placement	
	Description	Exam	Procedure
Florida A&M University	No requirement	No exam	Self-placed on seat time
Florida Atlantic University	Two semesters of foreign language, or exam for BA or BFA	Tests speaking only using OPI	Placed on basis of OPI rating
Florida International University	8-10 credits in a language, or exam	Tests language structures using MAPS	Placed on basis of MAPS score
Florida State University	The College of Arts and Sciences requires courses through 2000 level, or exam	Tests language structures using the ACT and writing sample	Placed on basis of ACT score and writing sample
University of Central Florida	The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences requires 10 semester hours, or exam	Tests language structure and listening using University of Wisconsin exam	Placed on basis of UW exam score
University of Florida	The College of Arts and Sciences requires 10 semester hours, or exam	Tests language structure and listening on modified SAT II exam	Seat time plus modified SAT II score
University of North Florida	The College of Arts and Sciences requires 8 semester hours of a foreign language or 9 hours of foreign culture, or exam	Tests speaking only using an OPI-like exam	Placed on basis of instructor's opinion of speaking ability
University of South Florida	Two semesters of a beginning course or one semester of a higher level course, or exam	Tests language structure using a modified University of South Carolina exam	Seat-time plus in-house exam score
University of West Florida	No requirement	No exam	Self-placed based on seat-time

The 1995 Pilot Study

A pilot study of the ACT, combined with an in-house writing sample, took place at Florida State during the summer of 1995 (LeBlanc and Lally 1996). This initial study followed 83 incoming freshmen who took the modified ACT language placement exam in French, German, or Spanish during the 1995 summer orientation at the university. Out of the 83 students who took the placement exam, 31 enrolled in a language course during the following semester. Only 24 of the 31 placed students agreed to participate in the study. In addition to tracking students who took the placement exam, this study also followed all students who enrolled in any course in which a student who had taken the placement exam had placed. The majority of the students in these courses had been either self-placed or placed using seat-time equivalencies.

At the end of the semester, final grades for all participants were collected. Analysis of the data revealed that there was an overall weak but positive relationship between the placement exam and final course grades. In other words, students who took the placement exam tended to do well in the course in which they were placed. The pilot study results, although generally encouraging, did not lend themselves to a broader application because of the small number of placement test participants. It was apparent that a second, larger study had to be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the placement process.

The 1996 Follow-up Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study, then, was to investigate the correlation between scores on this particular placement instrument (the ACT combined with an in-house writing sample) and final course grades. In other words, does this modified ACT exam place students into a course in which they will succeed? Specifically, the present study addresses the weakness inherent in the pilot study, namely the small sample size. For this reason, a follow-up study was conducted beginning in summer, 1996. The follow-up study used the same design and method as the initial study. The only modification was an increase in sample size.

Design

All incoming freshmen and transfer students who (1) took the departmental placement exam in the summer of 1996 and (2) subsequently enrolled in a language course during the fall term of 1996 were tracked throughout their first semester of language study. Students who were placed according

to the results of the modified ACT exam in French, German, and Spanish were compared to students who self-placed into the same language courses. Final course grade was the independent variable.

Participants

As in the pilot study described above, there were two groups of students who participated in the study. The first group was comprised of 233 incoming freshmen and transfer students who volunteered to take a language placement exam in French, German, or Spanish during the 1996 summer orientation at Florida State University. Students paid a one-time $6.00 examination fee in exchange for the possibility of earning 4, 8, or 12 credit hours in their respective language. The students who took the modified ACT exam were considered to be the experimental group. The second group of students, or the control group, consisted of all other students enrolled in any course in which a student who had taken the placement exam was placed. The vast majority of the students in these courses had been either self-placed, or placed using seat-time criteria.

Materials

The placement instrument used was the ACT language test in French, Spanish, and German, in conjunction with an in-house writing section. Although listening and speaking are skills that are stressed in a proficiency-based learning situation, because of personnel, budget, and time restrictions, we did not construct these related assessment components. The students took the hour-long national exam and then proceeded to write approximately 100 words in the target language on a given topic. There was a 45-minute time constraint for the writing sample. Each writing sample was scored holistically by two different instructors using a uniform point scale. Points were awarded for length, originality, vocabulary, structure, and continuity. Scores on the ACT exam were combined with essay scores to determine actual placement. In borderline cases a brief interview was conducted between the student and an instructor to elicit information concerning affective factors such as motivation, anxiety, or prior difficulties with language learning.

Procedure

Out of the 233 students who took the summer placement exam, 98 enrolled in a language course during fall 1996. Instructors of the 51 course sections in which the placement students had enrolled agreed to participate in the study. The placement students were neither singled out nor was the true purpose of the study revealed, so as to avoid contamination of the data.

Each instructor distributed three information-gathering forms to all students in the relevant sections. The three forms included an informed consent form, a language experience questionnaire, and a placement survey. The language experience form provided the researchers with information regarding students' previous study or contact with any language other than English and the placement survey addressed affective concerns related to the students' current placement as well as investigating what form of placement, if any, each student used.

At the end of the semester the final grades for every student in each of the 51 sections polled were collected. All sections within a given language and level were administered departmental tests and exams. In addition to uniform testing, all instructors for each language attended weekly meetings and were observed by the supervisor of undergraduate language instruction to assure that the same methods were being used and the same material was being covered in each section of a given language course. The final grade for each course was based on scores on chapter exams, quizzes, and the common final exam, plus class participation and a departmental attendance policy.

Results and Analysis

Eighty-eight out of the 98 placement students who enrolled in a language course during fall 1996 agreed to participate in the follow-up study. Final grades for the 88 placement students are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Distribution of Final Grades for Modified ACT Exam Participants

Language	Course	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Number of Participants
French	First-year	15	4	1	
	Second-year	2	2		24
	Third-year				
Spanish	First-year	26	9	3	
	Second-year	8	7		63
	Third-year	6	4		
German	First-year				
	Second-year	1			1
	Third-year				
Total					88

Final course grades and survey information for the remaining ten students are not known.

Analysis of the data revealed that there was an overall positive relationship between the placement exam and final course grades. In other words, as in the pilot study, students who took the placement exam tended to do well in the course in which they were placed. However, after breaking down the data by language and level, more significant information was revealed. For instance, there was a strong positive relationship between the placement exam and final course grades for students who placed into a first-year French ($p = .012$) or Spanish ($p = .003$) course, and a weak but positive correlation between placement exam results and final course grades for students who placed into a second-year French ($p = .273$) or Spanish ($p = .168$) course. A similar weak but positive relationship was found at the third-year level in Spanish ($p = .235$). None of the students taking the placement exam in French placed beyond the second-year level. No statistics for German were computed given that only one placement exam participant enrolled in a German course during the fall of 1996. The German student did, however, receive an A in the course in which she enrolled.

Discussion

Although yielding an overall positive relationship between placement and course success, as measured by final course grades, the results of this investigation raise four important points. First, in general, the outcome of the present study which was conducted with three times the number of participants as those in the pilot research supports the results of the earlier study. That is, there was an overall weak but positive relationship between the placement exam and final grades achieved for the courses in which students placed. Second, the results suggest that a specific placement instrument may not be equally effective across levels when testing a large group of students with extremely varied ability. For instance, within our pool of Spanish exam takers, the background information surveys revealed that there were students with native-speaking ability mixed in with students having taken only one year of high school Spanish. A third result of this study is the fact that although the modified ACT exam was not altogether ineffective in placing students at the second- and third-year levels, it was clearly unable to measure advanced abilities as well as it assessed more basic skills. The variation in the effectiveness across levels of instruction may well be due to the lack of assessment of listening comprehension and speaking abilities. The addition of speaking and listening comprehension components might have provided a broader assessment of the skills of the more advanced students in this study. Fourth, the nature of the large national exam used may not truly reflect the goals of the language courses in which the students

subsequently enrolled. Although all introductory and intermediate French, Spanish, and German courses at Florida State University espouse a communicative approach to language instruction, each language division exercises this overarching philosophy in its own individual way through the selection of texts, the preparation of uniform exams, and the development of syllabi. This variation between languages and within student groups — which is present at most institutions — could be the cause of some of the differences found among the results of this study when broken down by language and level.

Implications

The results of the pilot and follow-up studies suggest that a general instrument—a large national exam such as the ACT combined with an in-house writing sample—may be a useful and effective tool for institutions seeking to place a large number of incoming students who will most likely place into a first- or second-semester language course. Equally important, these results reveal that this same instrument, effective at placing students into lower levels of instruction, may not be as accurate when assessing more advanced students. Therefore, programs and institutions interested in placing small numbers of potentially advanced students may consider adding listening comprehension and speaking components to an existing national exam or developing an in-house test that examines all four language skills.

Faculty and administrators who are concerned about placing incoming foreign language students accurately may well wish to apply the results of this study to their own setting. The particular placement instrument used at Florida State University, a modified version of the ACT, was shown to be a rather effective tool in placing students in introductory courses and somewhat effective for placement beyond the beginning levels. Whether the ACT or another instrument is used, faculty must feel confident that students will be given every opportunity to be successful as they continue their study of a foreign language.

The use of an effective placement instrument is, of course, only one part in the development of a successful articulation program. State-wide efforts such as those in Ohio and Minnesota stand out as models for the rest of the country, while activities in other states demonstrate the immediate importance of this issue.

However, those states where system-wide efforts and funding may not yet be in place for adopting a wholly successful national articulation model, individual institutions and programs must direct their attention to solving their pressing placement needs. The results of the present study suggest that

effective placement instruments can be identified and serve both faculty and students in their pursuit of that "coherent, seamless sequence" of foreign language instruction.

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3

Pedagogy and the Emerging Spanish Canon

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Introduction

Up-to-date literary materials are critical for our students to be able to gain an understanding about life in today's Spain. As the millennium draws near, the search for canonized novels of the twentieth century intensifies. It is generally agreed upon that "contemporary" Spanish literature begins with the onset of the Spanish Civil War. The novels emerging from the post-war dictatorship tend to paint a somber picture of current Spain. Novels from the post-Franco era present a different picture of Spain, the country is now portrayed as vibrant, democratic, and rapidly changing.[1] The study of twentieth-century Spanish novels, filtered through the American educational system, generally does not embrace the current dynamic changes that have occurred in the post-Franco era.

The quest for the emerging twentieth-century Spanish canon must begin in Spain. The Spanish literary canon in Spain is formed approximately twenty years before it is recognized in the United States. The emergence of a contemporary Spanish canon can be traced through a variety of methods, including measurement of literary and public support. This study will identify novels that may be taught in US classrooms in the future. Formation of the literary canon for the twentieth-century Spanish novel is a complex phenomenon that is being debated in literary circles both in the US and in Spain.

Whatever our approach is to the canon, emerging novels that are recognized as possessing literary merit or considered authoritative may be useful for us to study and teach. The choice of novels to be taught in American classrooms is influenced by the works with which we have had experience. Of course, the degree to which an instructor has been able to keep up with current literary trends in the target country, in this case Spain, also affects our literary selections in the classroom.

Considering Harold Bloom's definition of the canon: "The Canon is the true art of memory" (35). It may be premature to talk about an emerging canon of twentieth century literature because of the lack of distance we have on what we have read. Has *any* twentieth century novel passed into the collective memory of a society or humanity? Rather than debate the rhetorical question, let us focus on the following data. Information concerning literary merit, awards, and popularity is available and could indicate which novels may be bound for the canon. In the case of the US Spanish instructor, typically living outside the target culture, these trends can be especially useful to guide one's own readings. Ultimately, this exposure will influence the selection of novels taught to US students as examples of current or contemporary Spanish literature.

Two previous studies have been published discussing Spanish canon formation in US for the twentieth century. Brown and Johnson (1995) generated a Spanish literary canon from reading lists at universities in the US that have undergraduate and graduate Spanish programs. Nickel's seminal study on the canon for the twentieth-century Spanish novel in the US uses the "Systems Theory" approach to probe fluctuation and modifications in the canon. Nickel examined literary manuals and guides, American university reading lists, and journals devoted to literary criticism. Nickel also discusses factors such as the definition of genre, intellectual fads, the availability of texts, and other determiners of canon formation. Because her study is one of fluctuations, it does not produce a single definitive list of authors and titles. Although Nickel's study is broader than that of Brown and Johnson, the substantive information does not contradict the Brown and Johnson study. Both studies emphasize the contemporary Spanish canon as recognized in the US.

Brown and Johnson's list was used as a point of departure for the questionnaire used in the interview portion of this present study. Spanish novels (1936-present) on the reading lists at US universities are presented in order of recurrence of appearance (with the first being the most frequently listed novel).

1. *Tiempo de silencio*, Luis Martín-Santos (1962)
2. *La familia de Pascual Duarte*, Camilo José Cela (1942)
3. *La colmena*, Camilo José Cela (1951)
4. *El Jarama*, Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio (1956)
5. *Señas de identidad*, Juan Goytisolo (1966)
6. *Nada*, Carmen Laforet (1944)
7. *Reivindicación del conde don Julián*, Juan Goytisolo (1970)
8. *Cinco horas con Mario*, Miguel Delibes (1966)
9. *El cuarto de atrás*, Carmen Martín Gaite (1978)
10. *Volverás a Región*, Juan Benet (1967)
11. *Primera memoria*, *Ana* María Matute (1960)
12. *Mosén Millán*, Ramón Sender (1953) [2]

It is interesting to note that the most current novel, *El cuarto de atrás*, listed in the Brown and Johnson reading lists compilation was published in 1978. This date suggests that, in Spanish programs in the US, the most frequently taught twentieth-century Spanish novels were published at least twenty years ago. By probing the emerging canon in Spain, we will gain insights into which works will eventually form the Spanish canon in the US that, if history holds true, will arrive in the US in approximately twenty years. However, it is this writer's belief that the almost twenty-year lag (from Spain to the US) will diminish because accessibility to foreign literature has markedly improved in recent years with the aid of computer-based technology.

Bookstores, Spanish publishing houses, and the Spanish Ministry of Culture were consulted to carry out this study.[3] Literary bookstores in Madrid have a function different from that of most bookstores in the US. They are the primary source for novels not only for the general public, but also for students at the high school and college levels. As the point source for novels in literary Spain, retail bookstores provide unique insight into novels currently read and taught in Spain. Book vendors display, provide shelf-space, and sell novels directly to the public. Additionally, publishing houses in Madrid and Barcelona play a key role in the selection of contemporary novels for publication. During the period from 1986 to 1993, 72% of all new titles in Spain were published in Madrid and Barcelona (Sanz García 257). The decision to publish new authors and titles and keep publishing authors already in print is in part the role of a publishing house. A publishing house's role in the number of volumes printed and sold and a novel's longevity undoubtedly influence canon formation, in part due to (lack of) availability. Literary prize winners are another indication of critical merit and popularity in established intellectual circles. Literary awards influence what is read and published and may reflect which novels and authors will emerge eventually to form part of the canon.

Methods

The search for the emerging twentieth-century Spanish canon in Spain began by collecting data from three primary sources: (1) literary bookstores in Madrid, (2) Spanish publishing houses in Madrid and Barcelona, and (3) the Spanish Ministry of Culture. Each of these sources influences, refines, and helps define the Spanish canon. Dr. Hilari de Cara and her colleagues at the Office of Education, a branch of the Spanish Ministry of Culture in the Embassy of Spain in Washington, D.C., helped identify sites appropriate to the study based on the following criteria. The charge was to identify the largest literary book vendors with departments that market the twentieth-century Spanish novel in Madrid. The study was limited to Madrid in part for logistical reasons. Additionally, the Madrid metro area has the highest concentration of universities in Spain, a density which would imply a significant number of educated readers. Also Madrid is considered the cultural capital of Spain. Data were collected on site in Madrid bookstores through discussion with book vendors. Nine out of eleven bookstores that were visited agreed to participate in the survey.[4] Store managers and division heads read and discussed the Brown and Johnson list. They were asked to comment on each novel's literary popularity in Spain and in the US based on the Brown and Johnson list. They were also asked to name three to four more titles of recent literary novels that they believe may be destined for the canon.

The same previously-mentioned group of officials from the Spanish Office of Education helped identify publishers appropriate to the study. Ten publishing houses out of 471 registered with the Spanish Ministry of Culture were identified[5] (Sanz García 253). The objective was to identify the ten largest and most prestigious publishers of twentieth-century Spanish novels.[6] Because of corporate consolidation, two had merged into one by the time the field work commenced, so nine publishers were contacted for an oral or written interview. The publishers were interviewed with a questionnaire. Two publishers, Alfaguara and Destino, responded completely to the questionnaire. The publishing houses of Cátedra and Seix Barral responded to parts of the survey. They were asked to name the most popular fifteen literary Spanish novels published from 1936-present and to place them in order of popularity regarding sales and printings. Publishers were asked to identify which of these novels are published by their editorial houses and to describe their sales trends. Additionally, they were asked to examine the Brown and Johnson list and to comment on the emerging canon in Spain.

The third venue of data collection in Madrid was the Spanish Ministry of Culture. Both in the Ministry's booth at Madrid's *Feria del Libro 1996*[7], and in the Madrid branch office of DELIBROS, lists were made available of

recent literary prize winners for the *Premio Nacional de las Letras Españolas* and *Premio Nacional de Literatura, Novela y Narrativa*.[8]

Results

Based on the book sellers' examinations of the Brown and Johnson list, their dominant observation was the absence of Spanish novels from the eighties and nineties being read and taught at US universities. Most book vendors declined to rank (in order of popularity based on sales) the titles on the Brown and Johnson list because they stated that it varies from year to year depending on which books are being studied at the schools and universities. There was a consensus among the book vendors that as core readings, the novels *Tiempo de silencio* and *La familia de Pascual Duarte* are perennial. Beyond these two novels there was fluctuation in the popularity of the other titles, although all titles were considered classic by the book retailers with one exception. According to four book sellers, Matute's *Primera memoria* had received more market attention in the US than in Spain. Nine book vendors each listed three to four titles that may be bound for the canon. The recommended novels were compiled and contrasted. If a title appeared only once, it was eliminated. Below is a compilation of novels (title, author, publication date) that appeared at least twice on all nine lists:

Corazón tan blanco, Javier Marías (1992)
El jinete polaco, Antonio Muñoz Molina (1991)
El invierno en Lisboa, Antonio Muñoz Molina (1987)
Galíndez, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (1991)
La ciudad de los prodigiosos, Eduardo Mendoza (1986)
La nublosidad variable, Carmen Martín Gaite (1992)
La sonrisa etrusca, José Luis Sampedro (1985)[9]
Luna de lobos, Julián Llamazares (1985)

The publishers' reactions to the Brown and Johnson list were similar to those of the book vendors, pointing out the lack of Spanish novels from the eighties and nineties being read and studied at US universities. Below are the novels that the two publishers that completed the survey identified as destined for the canon. Ediciones Destino limited their list to the requested three to four titles, and Ediciones Alfaguara suggested seven titles.

Ediciones Destino –
Ciegas esperanzas, Alejandro Gándara (1992)
Contraparaíso, Manuel Vincent (1993)
Duelo en el paraíso, Juan Goytisolo (1955)
La soledad era esto, Juan José Millás (1990)

Ediciones Alafaguara –

El desorden de tu nombre, Juan José Millás (1988)*
El gran momento de Mary Tribune, Juan García Hortelano (1972)
El jinete polaco, Antonio Muñoz Molina (1991)
Galíndez, Manual Vázquez Montalbán (1991)
La saga fuga de J B., Gonzalo Torrente Ballester (1972)
La sonrisa etrusca, José Luis Sampere (1985)
Ultimas tardes con Teresa, Juan Marsé (1965)

The prize lists furnished by the Spanish Ministry of Culture yielded one contemporary Spanish novelist who has won the Nobel Prize for Literature, Camilo José Cela in 1989. Miguel Delibes (1991) and Carmen Martín Gaite (1994) were two Spanish novelists who recently received the literary prize bestowed by the Spanish Ministry of Culture titled the *Premio Nacional de las Letras Españolas*. The prize is awarded to living authors and is not given for a specific work, rather the sum of their literary contributions. Another significant list of the award recipients of the Spanish Ministry of Culture's "National Literary Prize for Novel and Narrative" begins with the award winner each year from 1987-1995.

Premio Nacional de Literatura "Novel y Narrativa"

1987 *La fuente de la edad*, Luis Mateo Díez
1988 *El invierno en Lisboa*, Antonio Muñoz Molina
1989 *Obabakoak*, Bernardo Atxaga
1990 *Juegos de la edad tardía*, Luis Landero
1991 *Galíndez*, Manual Vázquez Montalbán
1992 *El jinete polaco*, Antonio Muñoz Molina
El manuscrito encontrado en Zaragoza, Francisco Nieva
1993 *Estatua con palomas*, Luis Goytisolo
1994 *El lenguaje de las fuentes*, Gustavo Martín Garzo
1995 *Dins el darrer blau*, Carme Riera

Discussion

All of the titles generated by the book vendors, publishers, and literary prize lists have received positive critical appraisal and enjoy popular support. An analysis of the collected data points out a few titles that are contenders for the emerging Spanish canon. The data demonstrates that Antonio Muñoz Molina's *El jinete polaco* and Manual Vázquez Montalbán's *Galíndez* are the only titles that appear on the lists of the book vendors, publishers, and awards.[10] *La sonrisa etrusca* by José Luis Sampedro appears on the lists of both the book vendors and publishers. Carmen Martín Gaite is the only author

to have a title, *La nublosidad variable*, appear on the book vendors' lists and to have been awarded the national literary prize for her contributions to letters. The following is a list of contemporary post-Franco Spanish novels that have the potential to complete the twentieth-century Spanish canon. The list is a product of divergent points of view and reflects a homogenization of current Spanish literary opinion based on the data collected in this study.

El jinete polaco. Antonio Muñoz Molina
Galíndez. Manual Vázquez Montalbán
La nublosidad variable. Carmen Martín Gaite
La sonrisa etrusca. José Luis Sampedro

Conclusion

The portrayal of contemporary Spain is different in novels of the eighties and nineties. As a result, a staunch contrast exists with novels from the Franco period and the years immediately following the dictatorship. The novels identified in this study represent candidates for the Spanish canon from the latter part of the twentieth century. Spanish instructors in the United States interested in contemporary Spain should teach from current Spanish literature to accurately represent Spain to our students. Titles from the emerging Spanish canon should be included when teachers are considering what to teach. Whether students are reading entire novels or parts of novels, a fair representation of current Spain as reflected in the novel is the goal. Moreover, this is an era when literary materials are becoming easier to obtain from abroad. Spanish instructors in the US are in a better position than ever to close the approximate twenty-year lag in transference from Spain to the US. What Spanish instructors read clearly influences what students study. Whatever a teacher's approach is to selecting texts for students, merely by giving thought to the contrast between the Franco and post-Franco era literature should help focus the desire to be fair and accurate in representing twentieth-century Spanish culture.

Notes

1 It is interesting to note that Latin American novels are not as elusive to the US reading audience because they are more readily available in the US, although often in translation. This is not the case with Spanish (Peninsular) novels that are not as frequently translated and marketed in the US.

2 *Mosen Millan* was later republished under the title *Requiem por un campesino español*.

3 The travel to carry out this investigation was supported by a Faculty Research Grant funded by the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

4 Bookstores participating in the survey were Antonio Machado, Blanquerna, Casa del Libro, Crisol, FNAC, Fuentetaja, Marcial Pons, Mexico, and Paraninfo.

5 The publishers considered had produced more than ten titles per year during the period from 1989 to 1993 (Sanz Garcia 253).

6 The publishing houses contacted were Alfaguara, Alianza, Anagrama, Castalia, Destino, Espasa-Calpe, Planeta, Seix Barral, and Tusquets. A special thank you to Dr. Hilari de Cara of the Education Office, Embassy of Spain, Washington, D.C., and Ramón Abad of the Cervantes Institute, New York, for their generous help in donating the above list and a list of contact names.

7 The *Feria del Libro de Madrid* is an annual event that takes place in Retiro Park each spring. Attendance typically hovers between 1.5 and 2 million people. The event lasts two weeks and in 1996 had 458 exhibitors, of which 195 were publishing houses, 197 were bookstores, 51 were book distributors, and 15 were official organisms connected with the publishing industry or the Spanish government.

8 DELIBROS is a governmental publication in magazine format dedicated to books and the publishing industry. A special thank you to Teresa M. Peces, *Redactora Jefe* at DELIBROS, who was instrumental in furnishing prize lists for this study.

9 *La sonrisa etrusca* is one of a growing number of Spanish novels available on audio tape. This title is a collection of seven tapes that are read by the author. In the US these *libros en audio* are available through Santillana Publishing Company.

10 *El jinete polaco* also received the Premio Planeta in 1991.

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4

A French Culture Course in English: Strategies and Resources

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In many institutions of higher education today, a large number of students undertake no study of a foreign language. Although some years of study in secondary school may be required or recommended for admission to college, foreign language credit or proficiency as a graduation requirement in some institutions does not exist at all or is limited to a few degree programs. Often a foreign language may be an option in a general education structure, with students sometimes enrolling for as little as one semester. Students are hesitant to enroll in a language they have not previously studied, and, unfortunately, many choose to avoid foreign languages entirely. As a result of this state of affairs, many students are not only failing to reap the communication benefits of another language but are also missing the chance to acquire the knowledge and understanding of the cultures of those who speak these languages.

Teachers of all languages also notice that, even when undergraduates study a foreign language at a university, they overwhelmingly choose Spanish.[1] Judging by enrollments, the traditional intellectual and cultural values of French or German are less appealing to students than the utilitarian value of Spanish. This conclusion arises not only from national enrollment figures but from the personal experiences of many teachers, including this author who teaches at a regional university in Missouri.[2] As a result of the shift to Spanish and correspondingly to a focus on Latin America in this department, students are less aware of the contributions of French and other

European writers and thinkers to western intellectual development and to American democracy and culture. In response to the declining awareness of French culture, this author developed a course taught in English to acquaint college students who have little or no knowledge of the French language with the culture of France. This article discusses the framework for developing such a course and the issues which arise when teaching it. The materials and strategies outlined here could be applied to similar courses in German culture or Peninsular Spanish culture, among others.

A French Culture Course in English and The Standards for Foreign Language Learning

The development and implementation of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning are bringing attention to culture as one area to be addressed in the effort to raise the overall level of foreign language instruction. A culture course in English can contribute to the effort to revitalize language instruction. Lafayette et al. (1996) discuss many issues involved in implementing the new Standards, including innovative teaching in the area of culture.

Of the five goal areas identified by the Standards, the goal of communication is appropriately placed at the forefront of the discussion, and there is agreement that this position bestows the proper emphasis. A culture course taught in the student's native language is thus a compromise measure, since it sets aside the goal of communicating firsthand in the foreign language. The course described here does not aim to replace genuine language courses or suggest that this approach offers an equivalent experience. This course is not meant to challenge the primacy of communication; rather, it recognizes that in the current state of foreign language education, other benefits can profitably be achieved in an alternative course. The goal area of **cultures** is the primary focus of this course, which attempts to acquaint students with the products, practices, and perspectives of French culture. The goal area of **connections** plays an important role, since the course aims to relate French culture to the students' other areas of study, primarily in the disciplines of the social sciences and business, but also in science and technology. The goal area of **comparisons** is addressed by heightening awareness of the similarities and differences between French and American cultures. The area of **communities** is not specifically included in this course, since the students do not have the ability to interact in another language with others.

This course is also a suitable companion course for foreign language students whose linguistic abilities are not at the level of their intellectual interests. While this course extends knowledge and awareness of French

culture to students who may not have studied the French language, it also provides useful publicity for the value of French language study in the minds of students who, one hopes, will become more supportive of the place of French in the curriculum.

General Education and a Culture Course in English

The culture course in English is a way to maintain the presence of French (or other) culture in the humanities area of general education. Acquainting today's college students with the cultures of the languages taught in our institutions can result only in benefit to the quality of the overall curriculum.

In this author's personal experience, the feasibility of the course depended on finding a place for it in the structure of general education. A French culture course complements the objectives of most general education programs, which usually aim to develop several skills, chief among them the ability to communicate and to think critically. Students are expected to acquire research skills, to integrate knowledge, to compare, and to analyze. General education programs may also have as objectives an appreciation of aesthetic endeavors and an understanding of historical perspectives. In addition, a culture course supports the current attention to multicultural awareness and internationalization of the curriculum which are universal features of higher education today.

The course discussed here was developed within a general education structure which calls for students to choose two interdisciplinary courses at the third-year level, with a research paper as a required component. The course entitled "Contemporary French Culture" was accepted into this group. The many facets of the culture course offered a suitable combination of content and process to complement the objectives of general education. As a result, when the course was proposed and the rationale set forth, it met with general acceptance. To date, the course has been taught three times.

Course Appeal and Content

When developing a course on modern France, one builds on the experiences of others who have taught such courses in the past half century. In the early 1950s the work of Laurence Wylie provided the model for a contemporary French culture course. Thanks to the standards he set and the level of intellectual pursuit he demonstrated, the course which he pioneered has achieved widespread acceptance. After three decades of teaching, Wylie (1981) set out his advice on the structure and content of the course in a lecture given in 1979, which is highly recommended to any teacher new to the endeavor.

Wylie's experiences reflect the evolution of the course over several decades. In the 1950s and 60s, his students perceived the study of French as valuable because of its association with upward mobility and future success; knowing the French language and culture contributed to one's status as an educated person. Early courses emphasized France's civilizing contributions by focusing on France's literary, artistic, and intellectual heritage. A French culture course also served as an orientation to practical aspects of French life for students planning to study in France. Although readings both in French and English were assigned, the course itself was often conducted in English, a practice which diminished as the emphasis on oral communication increased.

Over the decades, student interests shifted and French culture courses attempt to reflect these changes. Wylie's course evolved towards examination of the attitudes and value orientations of the French, which was the focal point of his "Civilization of France" class when he taught it for the last time in 1979. Any view of France as a monolithic society had given way to a more multi-faceted approach. Today's course deals with a wider range of topics and takes a more global perspective, with attention to how both France and the United States react to issues common to many societies.

The experiences of Hope (1986) parallel those of Wylie in teaching a course on modern French culture. He notes that students today are less likely to come to the course with the reverential attitudes towards France evident in students of the past. He recommends attention both to changes in French society and to the continuities that remain, and he is pleased that today's instructor has a far greater quantity of material available for class use. For him, the essence of the course lies in trying to determine what is distinctively French about cultural aspects of modern society.

Anyone developing a French culture course, especially one intended for students coming to the course as novices to the topic, faces several issues which have no simple solution. Knox (1985: 426) states that cultural competence is widely accepted as important, yet there is "much less consensus concerning the behavioral vs. the informational (doing vs. knowing, experiential vs. cognitive, anthropological vs. sociological, etc.), and still less on how cultural competence is to be evaluated." Any way of approaching the material seems open to criticism; almost any generalization about French society can be proven erroneous, and what seems to be a trend today may be only a temporary phenomenon. A one-semester course must cover a considerable amount of basic material before integration and synthesis can take place. As for the instructor's qualifications, one may question a non-French instructor's ability to speak authoritatively or wonder if a native French instructor is able to provide more than a personal viewpoint. These

issues take on a particular keenness for an instructor designing a course for a general education audience. Since no consensus exists on the answers to these questions, each teacher must decide what is best in a given situation."

The course was developed to address the needs and interests of college students who sought to learn about French culture rather than to acquire language competence. The average class size for the three semesters the course has been taught is eighteen. The profile of the class members reveals a diverse student group of varying interests and backgrounds. Motivations for choosing the course also varied. Some students had an intense interest in France, others enrolled at the suggestion of a friend or even because of a convenient class time. A few were advanced students of another language (usually Spanish) who were interested in other cultures.

For purposes of this course, the definition of culture set forth in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1996, 43) is suitable. Culture "is generally understood to include the philosophical perspectives, the behavioral practices, and the products—both tangible and intangible—of a society." This course, Contemporary French Culture, is described in the Southeast Missouri State University bulletin (1996, 193) as "a study of French society since 1945, including attitudes, achievements, institutions, and life styles of the French people." Recent national surveys provide useful information concerning the content of French culture courses currently taught at the university level (Koop 1991a, 1991b). Like most such courses, this one considers a range of topics: political, social, religious, and educational structures; patterns of behavior, both public and private, including family life and leisure activities; products of high culture, such as literature, music, and the arts; and current issues facing France today, such as immigration, unemployment, and social welfare. France's role, both domestic and international, in technological development is included. Comparison of important aspects of French culture with contemporary American culture is appropriate for such topics as political and environmental issues, health care, and the status of women and minorities. In addition, a course today cannot overlook France's role in the European Community nor fail to consider expressions of culture in *francophonie*, French-speaking countries other than France.

In the classification of cultures as high-context or low-context, France has been described by Steele and Suozzo (1995, 55) as high-context, defined as a culture "in which human relations are governed by a relatively complex code of behavioral expectations, hierarchies, and obligations, one in which there are constant references to the past." As is characteristic of a high-context culture, many subjects are intertwined. In organizing the material, the teacher must choose an approach which provides students with a frame of reference for understanding the details of culture as part of an overall system with its own logic and coherence.

The instructor must make a selection of content, based in part on resources available, and balancing student interests with essential material. In a three-credit course lasting one fifteen-week semester, for example, rigorous selection must be made. As a general guide, one week needs to be devoted to France in the context of the European Union and one to two weeks to Francophone culture, including overseas departments and territories, former colonies, and other French-speaking countries. This leaves about three-fourths of the semester for considering the geography, institutions, and cultural products of France. Because of time constraints, it is not possible to include many details of daily life and behavior which may be introduced progressively in a longer sequence of language study, as set forth in the Standards.

Course Organization and Materials

The course described here is structured around three organizing principles:

- imparting basic information about French culture
- offering students the opportunity to relate French culture to their major area of study
- increasing ongoing awareness about France as a point of comparison with the United States in a wide range of current topics.

A useful activity for the first day of class is the viewing of an English-language promotional/information video about France and its regions.[4] Presenting a few cultural highlights of each region, a video overview acquaints students with French geography, an area about which most of them have little knowledge. A video of about thirty minutes intended for a general audience generates enthusiasm and paints a positive picture of the work to come.

Students receive a syllabus assigning daily readings and outlining the other work of the semester. They are expected to complete the readings before class. Approximately half of the class time is devoted to discussion of the content of the readings, with the remaining time divided among guest speakers, in-class film viewings, and oral presentations by students. These oral presentations consist of a report on an additional reading of the student's choice, subject to approval by the instructor. The student evaluates the reading and identifies three points from the work as essential, for which all students are responsible at exam time. The student also submits a written version of the report. Attendance is also required at a minimum of three films shown outside of class, which students may choose from the films shown as

part of a departmental French film series. The first goal, imparting basic information, calls up the question of class materials. The chief criteria for selection are the currency and accuracy of the information provided. Students often are familiar with stereotypes of French life, including negative ones. When asked on the first class day to jot down a list of things that came to mind when thinking of France, they reported the usual topics of wine, cheese, perfume, and fashion. They reiterated conventional opinions about the rudeness of the French and assumed the water was not safe to drink. The course must attempt to overcome these stereotypes and give students a picture of recent changes in France, while communicating some appreciation for the history which underlies and influences French life today.

Given that the materials assigned to students must be in English, the choices are understandably limited. The most useful approach has been to choose the best available overview of France today and supplement it with additional materials and activities. A good choice is a work entitled Through French Windows, by James Corbett (1994), which presents an overview of French life by synthesizing research done for the French public by French social scientists and journalists. For additional materials, the French Cultural Services provides dossiers on many topics.[5] A very useful publication is FRANCE magazine,[6] a quarterly publication issued by the Service de Presse et d'Information of the Ambassade de France and available at no charge. As a work produced to promote France to a non-French audience, FRANCE magazine has the disadvantage of being less critical of France than a more academic publication might be, but it has the advantage of being a source for background statistics and for recent trends. Upon request, the publisher also gives permission to teachers to copy articles for classroom use and even to compile them into a teacher-selected anthology duplicated locally and made available to students for a nominal charge to cover costs.

Conducting the course in English does not eliminate the vast array of authentic materials which have proven very useful in teaching culture in French language classes. Some authentic documents may be used even if the students do not know French, visual elements cross the language boundary. It becomes apparent that it is essential that the instructor know French, a French-speaking instructor can choose authentic materials and interpret them for the English-speaking students, whereas a non-French-speaking instructor cannot. For example, a French teacher who brings back from France several French newspapers published on the same date has an effective authentic document activity. Students can examine the newspapers using visual elements. They can compare the ratio of text to graphics, identify the content of the photographs, look for the presence of features such as advertising, crossword puzzles, television schedules, horoscopes, and politi-

cal cartoons. With the instructor's help, the class can draw conclusions about a range of newspapers from *Le Monde* to *France Soir*. Video segments from French television may be used if the visual elements are sufficiently clear: game shows, sport events, and weather reports, for example. Advertising, both in print media and in television commercials, may be analyzed from a visual point of view. The teacher who has personal slides or videos made while traveling or living in France will find them extremely useful both in conveying information and in generating interest.

A final type of authentic document which is useful on several levels is the commercial film available on videocassette. Films made for a French audience not only provide a look at a serious art form in France but also constitute a resource for cultural knowledge and a useful basis for comparisons with American culture. A carefully selected film may show such aspects as patterns of daily life, food, schools, housing, family relationships, leisure activities, transportation, and so forth. The comparison of a French film with an American remake (*Trois Hommes et un couffin* with *Three Men and a Baby*, *La Cage aux folles* with *Birdcage*, *A Bout de souffle* with *Breathless*) may highlight differences in lifestyles and values of the two cultures. Films are an invaluable resource since they do not have the disadvantage of being created for a non-French audience; they give an inside look at the culture that materials written in English do not.

There are many sites on the World Wide Web which offer information of many types on French culture, both in French and in English. This emerging teaching tool is rapidly becoming a staple of many courses. The challenge for the instructor is the determination of the usefulness of the sites available and their integration into the course.[7]

As with Internet materials, there is a vast amount of print material available in French for the instructor to draw upon for background information about every aspect of French culture. Teachers can choose from this abundance of material based on their own areas of expertise and the interests of the class. Useful resources in French are available to the teacher for background information. Current periodicals for teachers, such as *Contemporary French Civilization* and *Le Français dans le monde*, as well as periodicals for the French audience, for example, L'Express, offer an abundance of current information.

The second course goal, that of offering students the opportunity to relate the course material to their major area of study, was met in two ways. As mentioned above, each student selected a book to summarize and evaluate both in writing and orally. An extremely varied choice is available, including biographies of an interesting range of figures (Charles De Gaulle, Sarah Bernhardt, Albert Camus, Yves Saint Laurent) and works which touch on

many disciplines, such as business, politics, or the media. Second, the research paper requirement of this course gave students a wide range of options in choosing a topic of interest to them, quite apart from any personal expertise on the part of the instructor. New on-line research tools gave the students access to a great deal of information. As a result, a business student researched the question of a common European Union currency; a political science student traced the French role in Bosnia. Other research papers dealt with issues such as energy and environmental policy, immigration, and the film tariff controversy, most with a great deal of depth of understanding.

In support of the third aim, that of ongoing awareness of France as a vital player on the world cultural and political stage, students kept a current-events log in which they recorded any mention of France in the news or the media. This activity, too, produced a wide range of topics, such as discussions of France's internal social problems, positions on international political questions, releases of new French films, and developments in business ventures and in space technology. Many entries were reported from a range of newspapers and mainstream magazines and National Public Radio, which frequently carries segments on French culture. Sad to say, some of the references to France fall into the category of "French bashing" seemingly accepted by American popular media.[8] The relationship with France was personalized by inviting French students who were studying at the university to speak to the class. By assigning the class the task of preparing questions on current issues and areas of their interest and by providing interpretation for the French visitor where necessary, a cultural exchange experience was made more personally meaningful to the class.

Students were evaluated by traditional means, that is, by their participation in class discussions, their oral and written reports, their performance on essay exams, and the quality of their research project.

Conclusions

As reported in end-of-semester evaluations, the students were uniformly positive in their opinions that they had achieved a wide knowledge of French culture and had deepened their own area of interest. For the instructor, modifying and updating the course is an ongoing process. At an institution in which foreign language study is required for few students, the course provides a way to extend some of the goals of the Standards to students beyond the traditional foreign language classroom.

Notes

1 A survey of foreign language enrollments in colleges and universities conducted in Fall 1995 by the Modern Language Association (*MLA Newsletter* 28 [1996]) found that more students chose Spanish than all other foreign languages combined (606,286 Spanish enrollments of a total foreign language enrollment of 1,138,772).

2 Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau enrolls approximately 8000 students in a range of undergraduate programs, primarily in business, health and social services, education, and liberal arts. Many students are first-generation college students who work to finance their education. Foreign language study in high school is recommended but not required for admission.

3 For further discussion of these and related issues, consult the special issue of *SubStance* (1995) and a Forum of articles in *French Historical Studies* (1995).

4 *Discover the Country of France* is produced by French Government Cultural Services, Air France, and FranceRail and runs 26 minutes. For information, contact the French Government Cultural Services at the address in Note 5 below or at a regional Consulate. Another video overview of France is *France: Canvas of Dreams* (1991), available from World Video Travel Guide, Carlex Company, 1790 Livernois, Ste 206, P.O. Box 081786, Rochester Hills, MI 48308-1786. It runs 25 minutes.

5 These Facts on File dossiers are available by writing to: Ambassade de France, Service de Presse et d'Information, 4101 Reservoir Road, N.W., Washington, DC 20007-2182.

6 To obtain information on FRANCE magazine, write to the address in Note 5 above.

7 Many useful addresses are becoming available, such Hapax French Resources on the Web **(http://hapax.be.sbc.edu/)** and French Embassy in the US **(http://www.info-france-usa.org/)**.

8 For example, Newsweek columnist Jonathan Alter (1996: 50), in an article on public civility, offered the opinion that "if the world were polled on which country has friendly, open people, the United States, for all its faults, would be somewhere near the top—about 200 countries ahead of, say, France."

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Appendix

Below is a list of selected works in English useful to the instructor or to students in a French culture class.

Ardagh, John. 1991. *Cultural Atlas of France*. New York: Facts on File.

Bernstein, Richard. 1990. *Fragile Glory: A Portrait of France and the French*. New York: Knopf.

Braudel, Fernand. 1988. *The Identity of France. Vol. 1: History and Environment*. Tr. Sian Reynolds. New York: Harper & Row.

_____. 1992. *The Identity of France. Vol. 2: People and Production*. Tr. Sian Reynolds. New York: Harper Collins.

Brosman, Catharine Savage, ed. 1995. *Dictionary of Twentieth Century Culture: French Culture 1900-1975*. Detroit: Gale Research.

Buss, Robin. 1988. *The French Through Their Films*. New York: Ungar.

Carroll, Raymonde. 1988. *Cultural Misunderstandings: The French-American Experience*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cook, Malcolm. 1993. *French Culture since 1945*. London and New York: Longman.

Corbett, James. 1994. *Through French Windows: An Introduction to France in the Nineties*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Debré, Regis. 1985. *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France*. Tr. David Macey. London: Verso.

Flower, John E., Ed. 1987. *France Today*. New York: Routledge.

Horn, Pierre L. 1991. *Handbook of French Popular Culture*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Horowitz, Donald L. and Gerard Noiriel, eds. 1992. *Immigrants in Two Democracies: French and American Experience*. New York: New York University Press.

Lamont, Michèle. 1992. *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McMillan, James F. 1992. *Twentieth Century France: Politics and Society 1898-1991*. London and New York: Edward Arnold.

Rosenblum, Mort. 1986. *Mission to Civilize: The French Way*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Santoni, George, ed. 1981. *Contemporary French Culture and Society*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Tiersky, Ronald. 1994. *France in the New Europe: Changing Yet Steadfast*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Weber, Eugen Joseph. 1991. *My France: Politics, Culture, Myth*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

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5

A Task-Based Communicative Approach in FLES[1]

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In this article we discuss the nature of the Communicative Approach and one of its applications, namely, the task-based approach. Our focus is how we can employ the task-based communicative approach in a Foreign Language at Elementary School (FLES) program. Characteristics of tasks in terms of efficiency and effectiveness for FLES are presented. Types of grouping and the flow of information are described as important features of the task-based approach and are explored in relation to the language levels of the learners. We stress the importance of each learner's responsibility in the flow of information, by either sending or receiving and responding to the information. Finally, we show one example of an instructional unit consisting of several sequenced tasks.

Introduction

The term *communicative* has become a buzz word in the area of foreign language teaching. Currently there are few researchers and teachers who do not proclaim that the goal of foreign language teaching is for learners to develop the ability to communicate through communicative language teaching approaches. However, the various definitions of communicative teaching are broad and vague, resulting in differing opinions regarding what is the best approach to attain communicative competence (Higgs and Clifford 1982,

Richards and Rodgers 1986, Nunan 1989). One of the realizations of the communicative approach used in FLES is the Natural Approach (Mitchell and Redmond 1991, Curtain and Pesola 1994), advocated by Krashen and Terrell (1983). In this approach, teachers are urged to give ample comprehensible input to students, using only the target language in meaningful contexts. Another approach called the task-based communicative approach has been receiving greater attention (Candlin and Murphy 1987, Nunan 1989, Long and Crookes 1992, Yule et al. 1992, Brooks and Niendorf 1993, Crookes and Gass 1993, Lee 1995). However, there are few discussions and reports from FLES on this approach. In this paper, we discuss characteristics of the Natural Approach and the task-based approach. We then consider how the task-based approach can be applied to a FLES program by presenting a sample unit.

The Natural Approach

The Natural Approach is based on Krashen's (1981) language acquisition hypotheses. According to Krashen, acquisition of language occurs in a natural order, it takes place when people understand input slightly beyond their current level of competence, when their affective filter is very low. This input is called comprehensible input *i + 1*. (According to Krashen, "*i*" is input, "*1*" is one level above the current level of comprehension.) Therefore, teachers are urged to present comprehensible input in the target language. Comprehension is emphasized, and learners are not required to speak until they are ready. According to Terrell and Krashen, during Stage 1 students follow the teacher's commands. In Stage 2 students are asked questions with gradual progression—from yes-no questions, either-or questions, single/two word questions, to open-ended questions. In Stage 3, games and activities are used. Pair or group work may be employed, followed by whole class discussion led by the teacher.

Because of the emphasis on comprehensible input, teachers are the primary generator of the input and are required to give a constant flow of language input. However, whether comprehensible input is sufficient for mastering the foreign language has been controversial.

According to Schinke-Llano (1990), while exposure to the target language is necessary, it is by no means sufficient for acquisition to occur. Not all of the target language available in the environment constitutes input, only that which the learner is able to "take in" for processing can be input. Optimal criteria are that the input be comprehensible (*i + 1*), of sufficient quantity, interesting, and relevant to the learner.

Long (1983) also contends that input, as characterized by Krashen, is a necessary but not sufficient prerequisite for acquisition. According to Long, a necessary prerequisite for second language acquisition is interaction—without interaction and the resultant negotiated input, competence in the target language is not achieved. In addition to Long, other researchers recently have begun to emphasize the importance of task-based activities for learning a target language. For instance, Richards and Rodgers (1986) consider three principles of learning theory on which communicative teaching is based:

1. Communication principle—activities that involve real communication promote learning.
2. Task principle—activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning.
3. Meaningfulness principle—language must be meaningful to the learner to support the learning process.

This recent research by Long, Richards, and others concerning the communicative approach has brought about the task-based approach for learning a target language.

The Task-based Approach

Nunan (1989) defines a communicative task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form." Pica et al. (1993) classify the communicative tasks as:

1. *Jigsaw*. Each participant holds, requests, and supplies information related to task completion. Because no one participant is given all the information needed to complete the task, the flow of information is two-way in order for both participants to reach one outcome.
2. *Information-gap*. One participant has all the information and another needs to know the information in order to complete a task. The information flow is one-way. The task assigns a fixed role to each participant, who work together toward a common goal and outcome.
3. *Decision-making*. Participants expect to arrive at one mutually agreed upon solution, but no specific decision is expected.
4. *Problem-solving*. A single solution is expected.

5 *Opinion exchange*. There is no requirement for interaction, participants do not expect a single outcome.

Among these tasks, jigsaw and information-gap seem to be most popular and are often referred together as information-gap. Pica et al. conclude that although empirical evidence is lacking, the two-way information-gap is expected to be the most effective in terms of providing comprehension opportunities, production opportunities, and feedback opportunities to second language learners. Johnson (1979) discusses communicative processes and teaching methodology and argues that an information-gap is necessary for interaction to occur. He emphasizes the creation and practice of information-gap tasks in the classroom to attain communicative competence.

The advantages of using the task-based approach have been discussed by many researchers. Morrow (1981) maintains that after working with tasks, learners should be able to clearly recognize that they can do some things that are communicatively useful and which they could not do at the beginning of the class. He argues that processes of communication are as important as the forms because we can learn to communicate only by practicing communicative activities. Taylor (1987) suggests that the task-oriented approach gives students experience in functioning through discourse in the target language, because communicative competence is acquired when the language is *used* rather than *studied*.

Pair and small group activities are frequently used in the task-based approach. Group activity work is often mentioned as a merit of task-based teaching. For example, Brumfit (1984) and Long and Porter (1985) claim that small groups provide a greater intensity of involvement so that the quality of language practice is increased. In addition, the opportunities for feedback and monitoring are increased through adequate guidance and preparation by the teacher. The setting is more natural than that of the full class because the small group size resembles the setting of normal conversational groupings. Therefore, the stress which accompanies "public" performance in the classroom should be reduced. Small group settings also provide students with individualized speaking experiences as well as promoting cooperation.

According to Larsen-Freeman (1986), the goal of the communicative approach is to be able to use the language appropriate to a given social context. The role of the teacher is to be the facilitator of the students' learning, and students are seen as more responsible managers of their own learning process. This focus on student-centered instruction is consistent with Nunan's (1989) theories of task-based teaching.

How tasks should be used in the classroom is another important issue to be considered. Long and Crookes (1992) argue that target tasks should be

identified via a needs analysis, and the grading and sequencing of pedagogical tasks should be evaluated by assessing whether or not students can perform the tasks.

On the other hand, Krahnke (1987) argues that there are negative aspects to task-based teaching. First, task-based teaching requires a high level of creativity and initiative on the part of the teacher. Second, it requires resources beyond the textbooks and related materials, which are usually not found in language classrooms. Finally, task-based instruction is not teacher-centered. Instead, it requires individual and group responsibility and commitment on the part of students. Certainly, the task-based approach requires commitment from both teachers and learners, as Krahnke describes above. Whether these characteristics are regarded as negative should be debated.

The Communicative Approach in FLES

In Lexington School District One, South Carolina, foreign language programs in elementary school started six years ago. Each elementary school in the district currently offers one of three languages, French, Spanish, or Japanese. One of the approaches of the *South Carolina Foreign Languages Framework* for effective foreign language education is communication-based instruction. As a communication-based approach, the Natural Approach is widely employed. This approach is characterized by emphasizing comprehensible input, implicitly teaching through only the target language with a lot of cues, realia, and teacher-controlled activities. This use of the Natural Approach seems natural because of the students' limited proficiencies and their ages.

However, because of our teaching experiences, we feel that comprehensible input is not enough for students to acquire communicative competence, just as other proponents of the task-based approach claim. Through much trial and error, we found that an effective way to realize communication-based instruction resides in the task-based approach. The task-based approach is a "strong version" (Howatt 1984) of communicative language teaching, which claims that language is acquired through communication. However, almost all communicative tasks reported thus far are for adult learners. The question is that whether it is possible to develop tasks which fit the early stage of elementary school students whose proficiencies are limited to one word, or at most, chunks of words. We believe that developing such tasks is not only possible, but also can be very effective for children with minimal language proficiency. Several key factors for the communicative task-based approach in elementary school will be discussed in this article.

Communicative vs. Non-communicative

Using Morrow's (1981) definition, we define communication as exchange (two-way), or at least, transfer or understanding (one-way) of unknown information. The term communicative is defined as being related to unknown information. In order for tasks to be communicative, they must include an information-gap between two parties. The main objective of the tasks is to bridge the information-gap by using the target language. On the other hand, if there is no information-gap between two parties, the tasks between the two parties are non-communicative because there is no unknown information. Here we want to differentiate between the terms *task* and *activity*. We limit the term task to an activity that has an information-gap.

Implicit ways of teaching presuppose the existence of cues, i.e., gestures of the teacher, pictures, realia, routine situations, etc., which help the students understand the message of the teacher. By using cues, students understand the unknown words or sentences that are spoken in the target language by the teacher. This is how the part of "I" in *I* + *I* can be comprehensible, even though it is given in the target language. By our definition, the implicit way or the Natural Approach cannot be communicative because the communicative approach is supposed to incorporate unknown information. If unknown information is given with unknown language, there is no way for it to be comprehensible input. When students understand the message from the teacher, they relate the unknown word or sentence to situational information they already know.

The communicative approach, on the other hand, presupposes that students already have some knowledge of the target language. When students understand the unknown information, they relate the unknown information to the knowledge of the target language they already have. In the communicative tasks which are recommended by the researchers of the communicative approach, there is some prerequisite knowledge. For example, in order to complete the task of questioning friends' favorite sports, the students have to know the word "sports" or how to ask a question about the subject. The researchers of the communicative approach have rarely discussed how the prerequisite knowledge is learned. Can the prerequisite knowledge be learned communicatively? We believe this is highly improbable. Communicative tasks need non-communicative activity to give students the prerequisite knowledge. Communicative and non-communicative ways of teaching do not contradict each other; rather, they complement each other. In other words, in order for acquisition of the target language to occur, students must receive comprehensible input, and they have to practice communicating by using the knowledge which is acquired through this comprehensible input.

Grouping and the Flow of Information

Grouping is a very important factor in making classroom instruction efficient. Ideally, grouping students in pairs is the most efficient because students are continuously exchanging information with each other. In order to use this type of pair grouping, students need gradual preparation. We use five different types of grouping, depending on the language level of the learners. We named the five types of groupings Type #1, Type # 2, Type #3, Type #4, and Type #5. Type #1 requires that students have the least proficiency, and Type #5 requires the most. Type #1 and Type #2 focus on listening comprehension only. With Type #3 and Type #4, students have the opportunity to send information by speaking the target language, as well as by comprehending the information. Type #5 requires both high-level listening comprehension and speaking ability.

In Type #1, students are divided into pairs, and the teacher sends information to all the students in the classroom. The two students in each pair help each other to try to understand the information from the teacher. This type of grouping is used just after introductory activities. Because each student has a partner, the students do not have to be threatened with the lack of competence.

In Type #2, students work individually instead of pairs as in Type #1. The teacher gives the same information to all students. Each student is expected to respond to the information individually. This type of grouping is used after almost all students show proficiency in the activity of Type #1.

In Type #3, the sender of the information is a student who is ready to speak. This type of grouping can be used when some of the students seem to be ready to speak. Type #2 and Type #3 can be combined to engage a leader in dialogue with the teacher while the rest of the students listen for comprehension. This is a bridge from just listening comprehension to conversation. When the number of the students ready to speak increases, Type #4 can be employed.

In Type #4, students are divided into small groups of four to six students. The students work individually in the group. One student becomes a sender of the information, and the other students receive and react to the information. In this type of grouping, each student has more opportunities to become a sender of information. Type #5 is student-directed pair grouping. Students work individually to give information to or seek information from their partner. In all five types of grouping, each student is responsible for responding to the information individually or as a pair. This is an important difference from usual teacher-directed activities in which the students have neither the opportunity nor the responsibility to respond to the teacher.

Characteristics of Effective Tasks for FLES

We have tried various kinds of activities. Some activities were very effective. Some activities were enjoyed by the students but turned out to be less effective compared to the other activities. The Bingo game is one example of an activity that was enjoyable and seemed to be effective but turned out to be ineffective. Bingo games are favorably employed in class activities by the FLES teachers. When playing Bingo, however, teachers cannot check the students' lack of knowledge. We think that the ability to check a student's lack of knowledge is a very important criterion for determining the efficiency of an activity. This game also does not reward the students who enhance their knowledge. The game can be won by chance. After playing Bingo, students do not always feel a sense of achievement.

Many other activities we have tried in the classroom also have flaws as instructional tools. We tried an activity in which we asked students to raise color cards. However we found this activity difficult to assess and boring for the students. Then we tried a guessing game using color beads. The teacher or student leader asked others to guess the color of a hidden bead. Although the students seemed to enjoy this game, we were not able to assess individual progress. Then we used interlocking color cubes to design tasks that we thought to be very effective. We will describe one such task later in detail.

Through our experimentation and analyses of various activities, as well as reviewing previous studies, we have developed some effective tasks based on the common characteristics stated below.

1. They include an information-gap. Activities that do not include an information-gap are called "activities" to differentiate them from "tasks." In order to communicate, that is to exchange, or at least transfer or understand unknown information, there must be an information-gap between two parties. If an activity does not have an information-gap it cannot be communicative by our definition.
2. They can be repeated without making students bored. Repetition is a necessary factor for foreign language learning. Without repetitive practice, students cannot retain the acquired knowledge. If students cannot repeat the tasks without becoming bored, the tasks are not worthwhile in the classroom.
3. They can be performed in a small group or pairs. As we mentioned above, all students must have the opportunity to get actively involved in communicating information. The task should accommodate vari-

ous kinds of grouping so that we can choose the type of grouping according to the level of learners. Students have more opportunities to be senders of information in smaller groups.

4. They appeal to multiple senses. There are various types of students in the class. Students may have different learning styles. They may be auditory learners, visual learners, or psychomotor learners. The more senses the tasks target, the more students are attracted to the tasks. For example, tasks using colorful materials, manipulatives, music, and those requiring physical movement of the students are considered effective.
5. They require the students to practice processing the information. As we mentioned earlier, comprehensible input is not enough to achieve communicative competence. Tasks must give students the opportunity to practice processing the information by using acquired knowledge.
6. They are reasonably challenging. Tasks that are too easy or too difficult discourage students. The pace and setting should be changed to continuously challenge students according to their language level or developmental stage.
7. They make it possible for the teacher to assess the students' progress easily by having visible products as outcomes. All the students at the same time can be assessed in this manner.
8. They provide students with a sense of achievement. Students feel good about themselves when they are able to complete the tasks successfully.

The next section illustrates some examples of effective tasks that we are currently employing in the classroom.

Instructional Unit

Carefully planned and sequenced tasks can be used to develop an instructional unit. In this way, tasks are not only activities in the foreign language program but are also the objectives of the program. The main objective of the unit is successful completion of the final task in the unit. In order to complete the final task successfully, students are required to complete the preceding sequential tasks. One example of a unit incorporating tasks will be shown in this section. In Task 1, students master the use of one-digit

numbers. In Task 2, the students master the use of two-digit numbers. In Task 3, the students master ten color terms. In Task 4, the students are able to use both number and color terms in the context of sending and receiving information about the prices of various items. Before each sequential task is employed, the teacher must first introduce the new terms. This introduction can be performed in various manners. However, our focus in this paper is on the tasks themselves, so introductory activities are not included here in this unit. In order for the readers of this article to see the objectives of the tasks and the interrelation of the tasks clearly, the tasks will be discussed in reverse order, from the final task to the first task.

Unit — "How much is the red umbrella?"

The goal of this unit is for students to use what is learned through the tasks to exchange information in a shopping situation. The objective of this unit is to be able to exchange information about the prices of items which are differentiated by colors. This unit consists of four tasks. In order to attain the unit objective, students achieve the objectives of each sequential task in the unit. Tasks will be shown using different groupings. Type #1, Type #2, Type #3, Type #4, and Type #5, which were discussed in the section on grouping and the flow of information. After the type number, the flow of information, from sender to receiver, will be shown. Type #5 is the exception, since students are both senders and receivers of the information.

Task 4: Clip Board Game

A Objective: exchange the information of the prices of umbrellas and hats.

B Materials: clipboard, umbrella-and-hat picture sheet (Appendix 1), blank paper, and pencil.

C Procedure:

Step 1 (Type #1: teacher- pair of students)

1. Students are divided into pairs.
2. Each pair of students is given one set of the materials. Paired students work together to complete this task.
3. Students put the umbrella-and-hat picture over the blank paper on the clipboard. The picture sheet has three different colored umbrellas and three different colored hats on it. Under each picture there is a cut-out space to write down the price on the

blank paper underneath. The picture is laminated so that it is durable and can be used many times.

4. Using the target language, the teacher tells students the prices of each items on the picture sheet, e.g. "The green hat is twenty dollars."
5. The paired students work together to determine what the instructor has said, and one student writes down the price under the corresponding item.
6. After informing the students of all the prices, the teacher tells the prices in English and the students check their answers.
7. Students switch roles within each pair.
8. The whole class repeats the same task.

Step 2 (Type #2: student - student)

After repeating Step 1, the instructor chooses one student who is able to produce the sentence telling the price using the target language. This student decides the price and tells it to the whole class. The paired students listen to this student and write down the price of the item.

Step 3 (Type #2 and Type #3: teacher/leader - students)

1. The teacher asks the students the prices of the items, "How much is the green hat?"
2. One of the students (leader) responds to the teacher's question and gives the price, "It is fifteen dollars."
3. After listening to dialogue between the teacher and the leader, the other students write down the price in the corresponding space.
4. After the teacher and the leaders exchange dialog for all six items, the teacher provides the answers and the students check their answers.

Step 4 (Type #2 and Type #3: leader/teacher - students)

1. One student asks a question, e.g., "How much is the red hat?"
2. The teacher or another student answers the question and gives the price.
3. The other students listen to the question and the answer and write down the price.

4 After the leaders and the teacher exchange dialogue for all six items, the teacher provides the answers and the students check their answers

Step 5 (Type # 5 student - student)

1 One of the students in each pair is given a price list of all the items on the picture sheet

2 Having the clipboard and the picture sheet, the other student in the pair asks the partner who has the price list the prices of the items

3 After getting all the prices of the items, the students check the prices, and they switch roles

4 The pair of students gets a new price list and repeats the same task

By following the steps above, the whole class can master the basic pattern of exchanging the information about the prices of items. Through this task, students can concentrate on the information they have to seek. At the same time, the students have to pay attention to the structure of the target language. In order to complete this task, the students have to complete the prerequisite tasks. Task 3 pertains to colors, which are necessary for Task 4.

Task 3: Color Cube Game

A Objective: be able to use ten color terms freely

B Materials: 10 interlocking color cubes \

C Procedure

Step 1 (Type #1 teacher - pair of students)

1 Paired students will be given a set of ten interlocking color cubes.

2 The students separate the interlocking cubes into individual cubes.

3 The teacher calls out a color, and the students put the color cube on top of the previous cube every time a color is called.

4 The teacher continues to call colors until all color cubes are connected.

5 The students compare their completed interlocking cubes to the teacher's set.

6 After checking the completed interlocking cubes, the teacher reviews the color terms with the whole class.

Step 2 (Type #3: leader - students)

One leader who is able to name the colors calls the colors instead of the teacher. The other students put the color cubes together by listening to this student. The leader shows the students the completed color cube sequence and the teacher checks the other students' cubes.

Step 3 (Type #4: leader - students)

The teacher divides students into groups of five or six students. Each member of the group has a set of color cubes. The teacher chooses one leader for each group. Each leader calls out colors. The other students in the group connect the color cubes in the order called. After all the color cubes have been called and the answer checked, another student becomes the leader.

Task 2: Two-Digit Numbers

In order to complete Task 4, students must know the numbers in the target language. In this task, students practice recognizing and using the numbers.

A Objective: recognize and use the numbers

B Materials: number sheet (Appendix 2), marker chips

C Procedures

Step 1 (Type #2: teacher - students)

1 Each student is given a number sheet and several chips. On the sheet there are twelve lines of numbers with eight two-digit numbers in each line.

2 The teacher calls out a line and a number from the line, the students put a chip on the number called.

3 The teacher continues to call numbers on the same line until two numbers are left.

4 The teacher announces the two numbers which were supposed have been left uncovered by the chips.

5 The teacher asks those students who got the answers correct to raise their hands. From this informal evaluation, the teacher decides whether it is necessary to continue the task.

Step 2 (Type #3 leader - students)

One student calls out the numbers instead of the teacher. The other procedures are same as Step 1.

Step 3 (Type #4 leader - students)

The teacher divides the students into groups of five or six students. The teacher chooses one leader for each group. The leader calls out numbers, and the other students in the group put chips on the numbers. The answers are checked and the students take turns being the leader.

Task 1: One-Digit Numbers

In order to complete Task 2, the students must know one-digit numbers very well. In this task, the students practice recognizing and using one-digit numbers.

A. Objective: use one-digit numbers freely

B. Materials: a set of number cards from 1-10 for every student

C. Procedure

Step 1 (Type #1 teacher - pair of students)

1. Paired students are given a set of number cards from 1-0.
2. The students place the number cards in order on their desks.
3. The teacher calls out a number, and the students flip the number card which is called by the teacher.
4. The teacher continues to call numbers until all but two numbers are called.
5. The teacher announces the two number cards which were supposed to have been left untouched. The teacher performs an informal evaluation by asking students with the correct answers to raise their hands.

Step 2 (Type #3 leader - students)

One student calls out numbers instead of the teacher. The other procedures are the same as Step 1. By using the five grouping types in sequential tasks, the students are able to master the objectives of the unit both effectively and efficiently.

Conclusion

In this article we have discussed task-based instruction as a realization of the communicative approach. We suggested how the task-based approach can be applied to FLES by presenting an instructional unit. A task is defined here as a communicative activity that has an information-gap. We presented the common characteristics of good tasks: they include an information-gap, they can be repeated without making students board, they can be performed in a small group or pairs, they appeal to multiple senses, they require the students to practice processing the information, they are reasonably challenging, they make it possible for the teacher to assess the students' progress easily by having visible products as outcomes, and they provide students with a sense of achievement. We further described grouping, which is related to the language level of the students, as a critical factor in employing the tasks. We emphasized the importance of each learner's responsibility in the flow of information, by either sending or receiving and responding to the information by producing a visible outcome. This factor is a crucial difference from teacher-directed instruction, in which the teacher talks to the entire class and only a few students have opportunities to respond.

We also argued that in the task-based instruction, several tasks should be sequenced to attain the goal of the instructional unit. To expand on this concept, it is important to organize these tasks and units by considering the objectives of the curriculum as a whole. Discussion of the task-based approach in FLES has just begun. We hope that, through discussions and exchanges of information with researchers and teachers, we can achieve a better understanding of how to improve foreign language teaching for elementary school students.

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6

Vive le français: Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Students in French Classes

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Introduction

Although recent surveys (ACTFL 1994, AATF 1994) show a decline nationwide in the number of students studying French at every level, there are nevertheless some French programs which are thriving (Koop 1995). The number one reason for the decrease in student enrollment in French, mentioned by 37% of the AATF survey respondents, was the "growing popularity of Spanish perceived as being more useful and easier" (AATF 1995:4). Therefore, any attempts to halt or reverse the trend of declining French enrollment must consider these perceptions. Further, if French teachers at all levels of instruction are to recruit and register students for their classes and retain them at advanced levels, then teachers must recognize the characteristics of outstanding programs (Sims and Hammond) and learn to implement features of the almost 20% of programs reported to have increasing enrollment (AATF 1995).

This article first presents the status of French study in the United States. Next, it examines and dispels the myth that Spanish is easier than French. It then presents evidence of the usefulness of French, not only in the business world but also in other fields such as science and math. Finally, the article details the most important strategies for recruiting and retaining students in upper levels of French, thereby providing teachers of French with the information they need to increase enrollment in their programs.

French Enrollment—Past, Present, and Future (?)

Periodic surveys and tallies of public school enrollment nationwide in the various foreign languages have been carried out since the nineteenth century. A 1905 survey shows 10.1% of students studying French, none Spanish. By the mid-sixties, the percentages are almost even: 10.8% French, 12.3% Spanish. The most recent 1994 survey by American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (Draper and Hicks 1996) indicates that only 9.3% of students are enrolled in French, while 27.28% are in Spanish. It is evident that as more and more students are choosing a language, they are tending to choose Spanish rather than French or another language.

Another study which includes college- and university-level figures shows a much larger decrease in French enrollment. A relatively small but significant 1994 American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) survey of teachers and administrators shows an overall decline in French enrollment. Over a 3-year period the decrease averaged 45.8%—almost a 50% decrease in students. The ratio of French to Spanish students is approximately 1 to 2.15, showing an imbalance similar to the 1 to 3 ratio of the ACTFL survey. And finally, as predicted from the AATF survey, "colleges and universities will soon feel the impact of this trend" (Koop 1995). The latest Modern Language Association (MLA) statistics show a 25% drop in post-secondary French enrollment (Valdman 1997).

As indicated in the Introduction, the major reason given for choosing Spanish by 37% of those who responded to the AATF survey is the perception that Spanish is both easier and more useful than French. There are a number of other reasons cited which are related to the choice of Spanish over French or other languages. Respondents commented that there is a decrease in the academic level of students and therefore little interest in French (AATF 1995: 5). It may be that these students are more interested in an "easier" language. It was noted that fewer students take French in high school (undoubtedly because they are taking Spanish), a fact which in turn has an impact on French enrollment in college (4, 14). Also mentioned was the perception that French is too hard and that there are scheduling problems (5, 14), not surprising if

there are fewer French than Spanish sections from which to choose. At every level except elementary, from middle school/junior high school to university, the litany of reasons for the decrease in French enrollment goes on, invariably mentioning Spanish.

This influx of students into Spanish has obviously hurt French programs but has not always been positive for Spanish programs either. For instance, as enrollments in French decrease, more people, who may not be fully prepared or willing, are pressed into teaching Spanish. And larger Spanish classes may lead to lower proficiency (Walz et al. 1995b, Walz 1996). Spanish educators report a high drop-out rate after the second year, in part due to the students' realization that Spanish is not so easy after all (Kraemer 1995, McKeithan 1997, Staley 1997).

In addition, the suggestions by respondents to the AATF survey (1995) for ways to promote French showed concern for portraying French as a valuable and important language, while recognizing the status of Spanish.

- develop awareness on usefulness of French
- prepare a videotape of people using French on the job
- do not compete with Spanish
- make Spanish a requirement
- cut back bilingual education, which is always in Spanish
- dispel the idea that Spanish is the only foreign language
- advertise the importance of French in business and as a world language
- make available promotional materials on business and technological developments in French-speaking countries
- show the importance of French for the United States (GATT, NATO)

Interestingly, more than 20% of the respondents suggested developing awareness of the usefulness of French, only one percent of the respondents thought the myth that French is harder than Spanish should be dispelled (AATF 1995:5). Why? Do French teachers themselves believe the myth? Or do they not have the information to discredit the misperception?

An American Urban Legend: "Spanish is easier"[1]

When a group of French teachers was asked which statement was heard more, "French is harder" or "Spanish is easier," the overwhelming majority indicated the latter (Friedrich 1996). This myth,[2] which discourages students from taking French, must be dispelled. Having reached almost epic proportions or at least the status of an urban legend, what does this myth tell us?

In *The Vanishing Hitchhiker: American Urban Legends & Their Meanings*, folklorist Jan Brunvand explains that urban legends are an integral part of our culture and are believed by even the most sophisticated and well-educated folk of modern society (1981: xi). This traditional material is told "in the course of casual conversations" and in special situations such as "campfires, slumber parties, and college dormitory bull sessions" (4). They are unique, unselfconscious reflections of major concerns of individuals in the societies in which the legends circulate (xii), in this case, of students. We can ask ourselves "What are the concerns this myth reflects?"

If we think about the concerns of children, adolescents, young adults, their parents, and perhaps American society in general regarding education, we might see that many people want good grades, some do not want to work too hard, or be challenged too much, most do not want to fail or to be embarrassed.

Brunvand explains that urban legends "gratify our desire to know about and to try to understand bizarre, frightening, and potentially embarrassing events" (12). The prospect of studying a foreign language may indeed seem to hold the potential for "strange" experiences and embarrassment for some of our students.

According to Brunvand, we should ask who tells the stories, when, to whom, and why, to understand legends (15). "Spanish is easier" or "French is harder" is usually said by students to fellow students or to an advisor, with anxiety about, or fear of, a new situation, or at least lack of confidence about what to do (what language to take). French teachers and others would do well to address these concerns. One way we can do this is to dispel the myth and show our students that French is actually quite user-friendly.

French "Made Easy"

Traditionally, advisors, counselors, and others have routed the better students to French (or German or Latin, if available), and the "weaker" ones to Spanish in the belief that it is an easy language (Granowitz 1994a; Mohanty 1994a; Staley 1997; St. John 1995; Williams 1994). When students of Spanish encounter the inevitable difficulties with the language, as noted earlier, they often feel betrayed, and remark, as one teacher put it, "Boy, if Spanish is easier than French, then French must be impossible!"

So, it is imperative that the French-is-harder myth be debunked. In fact, a recent series of letters to the editor and short articles appearing in the *AATF National Bulletin* have discussed the subject (Granowitz 1994 a, b; Mohanty 1994a; Peche 1994a, 1996; St. John 1995; Williams 1994).[4] Peche presents the most balanced, although brief, argument. He refers to the belief that

Spanish is easier as "unfounded rhetoric." Although this teacher of both French and Spanish avoids drawing clear conclusions, the chart he provides offers that opportunity to the reader. An abbreviated version of his chart follows:

	French	German	Spanish
Vocabulary	less difficult	less difficult	more difficult
Grammar	less difficult	more difficult	more difficult
Pronunciation	more difficult	somewhat more difficult	less difficult

This analysis would seem to indicate that French is the easiest, followed by German, then Spanish. Spanish is shown to be the most difficult of these three commonly studied languages. This is information that we, as French teachers, need to share with students, parents, advisors, counselors, colleagues, and others who figure in the students' decision about which language to take.

A closer look at why French is easier than Spanish may help in discussions with our students, colleagues, and others. How do we talk about one language as being easier or harder than another? First, we are talking about "easier," (or "harder") for the majority of our students who are native speakers of English. By "easier" we mean requiring less effort (Webster's 1990), which is not to say that the study of any foreign language is not a discipline requiring considerable effort.

Languages have been classified according to the number of hours of training required for students to reach proficiency levels from 0 (lowest) to 3 (highest).[4] For example, after 480 hours of training, a learner with average aptitude studying a Group I language (Romance and Germanic) would be expected to reach level 1+. The same learner studying a Group II language (e.g., Greek) would be at level 1, studying a Group III language (e.g., Hebrew) at level 0+, and a Group IV language (e.g., Japanese) at level 0+. Thus an English speaker requires less training (time and effort) to reach comparable levels of a Romance or Germanic language than to reach the same levels of other Indo-European or non-Indo-European languages.

So, the answer to the question about whether a language is easy or easier (requiring less time and effort) than another, or difficult or more difficult (requiring more time and effort) than another depends in part on how similar the target language is to the native language or other language the person, or student, already knows. To make the point in another way, consider an Italian woman. Would it be easier for her, assuming no prior knowledge of another language, to learn Spanish or Chinese? Obviously, she would learn Spanish more easily, with less time and effort.

Since the language our students know is English, then we can first look at what we know about English, and then compare English to French, English to Spanish, and French to Spanish to see how French is easier.

French, the User-Friendly Language

Even though we may want to discuss what we know about English, it is, in fact, impossible to talk about the English language and its history without mentioning French. And that fact alone should give a clue as to which language is more similar to English.

English is an Indo-European Western Germanic language, like German, Dutch, Flemish, Afrikaans, Yiddish, Frisian, and Luxembourgian.5 The Norman Conquest of 1066 brought William the Conqueror and the French language to England, where French reigned as the language of the nobility and of the court and introduced thousands of new words into English in many lexical fields. French had a tremendous influence on English for between two and three hundred years. Some of the rulers did not even speak English—they were native speakers of French. Henry IV, who ascended the throne in 1399, was the first English king since the Norman Conquest whose native language was English and not French.

Apart from the enormous amount of English borrowings from French in the Middle Ages, English has continued to appropriate words and expressions from French since the Renaissance. There are considerable numbers of words in lexical fields such as cuisine and restaurant vocabulary, and political and social vocabulary which come from French. In fact, some years ago English dictionaries stated that 60 to 70 percent of English vocabulary came from French. Now 40 to 50 percent is the figure usually cited (Soci 1996). So we can say that approximately half of English vocabulary comes from French.

In the "Foreign Words and Phrases" section of any dictionary are more recent contributions to the English language. Besides Latin, there is no language which has provided so many expressions to English. In addition, from the fifteenth century on, both English and French borrowed from Latin, and to a lesser extent from Greek, so that even more English and French words resemble each other.

In recent years the borrowings have gone the other way. French has taken so many words and expressions from English that the Académie Française and the French Ministry of Culture have attempted to discourage or even outlaw these borrowings. Lists of words which are identical, or nearly so, in French and English might impress students, parents, colleagues, and others we are trying to convince of the similarity of the two languages. We might ask,

for example, the meaning of the following French words: *cuisine, orange, omelette, croissant, T-shirt, week-end* (the Spanish equivalents are: *cocina, naranja, tortilla, media luna, camiseta, fin de semana*)

Another point worth considering is that French, although a Romance language, borrowed heavily from Germanic. So both English and French have many words of Germanic origin in common. Also, both languages borrowed from Celtic and so have still more vocabulary in common.

There are even some similarities in grammatical structure. The French *passé composé*, e.g., *il est venu, il est allé*, is similar to English. For example, although today we usually say "he has come" or "he has gone," English has, or had, the structure "he is come," and "he is gone."

Spanish, the "Different" and More Difficult Language

There is really not much we can say about English and Spanish. They simply do not have the history in common that English and French do. To be fair, we can say that there is vocabulary from Latin roots in both Spanish and English and that many of the words which came into English from Norman French also exist in Spanish, but the French form of the word is invariably closer to the English. There are some words of Germanic origin in Spanish, as in English and French, and even fewer of Celtic origin. Spanish also contributed some vocabulary to English, although not to the degree that French did. But Spanish (Portuguese, too) has something neither French nor English has, an element which distinguishes it from the other Romance languages, and renders it even more different from English and French: about 9% of its vocabulary is from Arabic.

It is perfectly obvious that French and English have much more in common than Spanish and English, and by that criterion alone we can probably say that French is "easier" in the sense that it is less different from English than is Spanish.

French *Is* Easier

But let us compare selected features of French and Spanish briefly. Of course, both are Romance languages with many points of grammar and vocabulary in common, although as we have seen, there are considerable differences, too. The feature cited most often as more difficult in French than in Spanish is the sound/symbol correspondence (Ranson and Carlisle 1996, Valdman 1996c, Williams 1994). It is undeniable that the spelling of Spanish is more phonetic, but it must be noted that French is relatively predictable, for example, *oi* is almost always pronounced [wa], whether *bois, dois, fois, joie, lois, moi*, or *mois*, and so on through the alphabet. Some teachers (Amey

1996, Friedrich 1996, Graycar 1996) find that the distribution of the poem entitled "Hints on Pronunciation for Foreigners" (Appendix) early in a first-year French course makes students grateful for the relative ease of French spelling in comparison to English.

There are two main reasons often cited as to why Spanish is more difficult than French. The first is that the subject and subject pronoun in Spanish, once the subject has been named or established, is superfluous and not repeated. This absence renders the reading and oral comprehension of Spanish more difficult, and at times impossible, for all but the most fluent of students (Friedrich 1996, Graycar 1996). The second reason concerns verbs (Friedrich 1996, Peche 1996, Valdman 1996c). Both languages have fourteen tenses "on the books" (Kendris 1996a, b), but French teachers do not normally teach for production, and only rarely or at very advanced levels, for recognition, the following tenses: the *passé simple*, the *imparfait du subjonctif*, the *passé antérieur*, and the *plus-que-parfait du subjonctif*. This list reduces to just ten the number of tenses normally taught in French. In contrast, in Spanish, all fourteen tenses must be taught.

One of these tenses, the preterit, is particularly difficult in Spanish, mainly because of the relatively large number of irregular forms and the necessity of using the different endings for each conjugation, person, and number, principles that are especially difficult for students. The subjunctive mood is also of special concern. In Spanish there are four subjunctive tenses and two forms each of the *imperfecto de subjuntivo* and the *pluscuamperfecto de subjuntivo*, all four of which are used in written and spoken form by natives, for a total of six forms, as opposed to only two commonly used in French.

By dispelling the myth that French is hard(er) and by showing instead that French is actually easier than Spanish, teachers can encourage decisions on language study based on more appropriate considerations, such as student interest, career and travel plans, and cultural interests and heritage (Peche 1996).

French Is Useful and Practical

In fact, it is in the area of careers where another near-myth is often invoked, that of the supposed lack of usefulness and practicality of French, a concern expressed by some 20 percent of respondents to the AATF survey (1995).

Fortunately, teachers and others (Romer and Head 1996, Kraemer 1995, Soci 1996) and AATF Task Force committees have been hard at work showing how useful and practical French is. They have produced some

wonderful publications for use with students, parents, administrators, and others. Most issues of the *AATF National Bulletin* have a page entitled "Open Your World with French" that contains a wealth of useful information. Romer and Head (1996) have produced fact sheets on the usefulness of French and on the success of their students in putting French to use in their jobs. We must all publicize French in ways meaningful to our students.

What information would be meaningful to our students, in particular to those who are more interested in business, math, or science, or who have no intention of majoring in French? It would certainly help to tell them about college, career, social, and personal advantages of taking French. We must make them aware that there are advantages that begin in high school and continue throughout their careers.

The first hurdle is to convince parents and students that it is not just Latin that will improve their PSAT and SAT scores. Even today, parents will argue that Latin is the way to improve verbal results. We need to make them aware that research indicates that it is simply the number of years of a foreign language that affects verbal SAT scores, not the study of a specific language such as Latin, and we need to tell them that no other subject has the same positive effect. Five years of foreign language study, any foreign language, were associated with higher verbal SAT scores, as opposed to five years of any other academic subject (Cooper 1987). Studies of second language acquisition, again, any language, have also shown that cognition is enhanced as students increase years of study.[5] Metalinguistic awareness, reasoning ability, verbal intelligence, cognitive flexibility, and divergent thinking have all been demonstrated to improve through foreign language study.

Research has also demonstrated higher aptitude for acquiring computer languages in students who continue foreign language study. Isacco et al. (1987) hypothesize that as students become more familiar with the syntax and grammar of a foreign language, they may apply this knowledge and logic to artificial computer language, thus facilitating their acquisition.

Some parents of young people who are interested in the sciences often demand German, thinking that it provides a special skill for future scientists. We as teachers need to be prepared with information from doctors, scientists, technology experts, and other scientifically-oriented professionals that disputes this assumption. In fact, we need ammunition that indicates that, indeed, French may well be the language that serves all of these careers best.

In the medical field, for instance, doctors tell us that the only recent foreign medical journals and articles not already translated for them are those from France (Moore 1990), which, incidentally, is pumping huge sums of money into medical research as we write. France and the United States are the two major countries doing serious research on the AIDS virus (Kraemer

1995), surgery techniques, and cardiac problems, the two countries regularly share such information during exchanges, seminars, and conventions. The Pasteur Institute regularly conducts exchanges with the United States, and the greatest number of seminars on surgery and heart research outside the United States or Canada is held in France (Moore 1990).

In computer, cyber-communication, and telecommunications technology fields, a recent graduate of the South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, now at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology working on a Ph.D., tells us that he finds that the most interesting new technology, articles,[4] and innovations often come from France (Ullmer 1994). He also notes that literature concerning that same technology seems to be the least likely to be translated into English. Indeed, English and French are the two main languages of cyberspace (AATF 1996).

Why would so many new ideas be coming out of France? One only needs to be reminded of a few facts in order to understand why. France has the world's second most important defense electronics company, Thompson. Also, Alcatel is the number-one worldwide distributor of electronic components. Stung by international accusations of antiquated telephone and communication technology several decades ago, France has dramatically increased its funding to research in these fields and is now a world leader in these technologies. Anyone who has travelled to France in the last decade or two knows that France's advanced technology provided computer chip cards and Minitel services years before similar commodities appeared in our country. Also, new high-definition television was invented in France, which is the world's largest manufacturer of televisions (Mohanty 1994b). These are just a few reasons why students interested in entering the fields of electronics, telecommunications, computers, and other high-tech professions would do well to have an extensive knowledge of French. As an example of exactly how knowledge of French comes into play, it might be useful to relate the following statement by the above-mentioned M.I.T. graduate student:

> Two instances stick out in my mind. In the first, a friend had written pertinent thesis work in French, and it was useful to be able to skim this and several other related documents to get the general drift. More recently, . . . I was reading a document by Charles Babbage of analytical engine fame, and in the middle of the document, he cited a long and important passage—in French—by a leading French scientist. Of course, no translation was provided, for of course, all educated people speak "le français, n'est-ce pas?" I was able to get through it, if very slowly, and understand it. (Ullmer 1996)

Young people who are interested in professions involving transportation or space exploration should know that France's TGV (train à grande vitesse) set the world's speed record in 1991 (Kraemer 1995) and has been sold to other countries, including the United States. Texas and other states are looking at the TGV. France's Renault is the maker of Mack Trucks (Mohanty 1994). The second greatest aeronautics industry in the world belongs to France, and it continues to put satellites into orbit with its Ariane rocket. The United States and France have shared aerospace technology for years, and French astronauts have shared space capsules with Americans several times. These astronauts chatted amicably in both languages during the flights, as television documentaries showed.

For students interested in business and sales, it is important to know that France has the world's fourth largest economy and is the fourth largest recipient of US foreign investment. More than 1,200 French companies have subsidiaries in the United States employing almost half a million workers (Soci 1996). Canada, our bilingual neighbor to the north, is the largest trading partner of the United States, evidenced by the dual French/English translation on product labels in our stores.

Students who want an advantage in the business world need not only a basic knowledge of French but would do well to pursue the study of commercial French in college. The misconception that French is not an important tool out in the "real world" is one that seriously undermines enrollment and must be corrected.

We need to remind students who like the arts, dance, the food industry, fashion and beauty products, or advertising that all of those professions rely consistently on a vocabulary based on French. The basic lexicon used in all of those fields originates from French and is a needed tool for those who want to rise beyond the lower levels of those professions.

Successful people, especially those in marketing and business, when polled in magazine articles about the language they most wish they could speak in order to enhance their professional, social, cultural, and private lives, invariably choose French. Why? It results from something as basic as being able to pronounce the dish or wine ordered for your boss in a nice restaurant, to something as advanced as knowing how to word a fax to a fellow surgeon in France asking him to send you the details of how he uses his new cardiac stimulator. It is as simple as selling a new foundation makeup without being embarrassed about how to pronounce or translate the French name, and as complicated as not being the only chief of state at a world conference who cannot join in the social chatter in French during the break. (This situation actually happened to President Reagan.) French is a language of culture,

politics, diplomacy, art, fashion, publicity, dance, technology, science, and cuisine. It could mean the difference between getting that job and not, between keeping that job and not, and between rising in that job and not.

Testimonials from our students, present and former, will demonstrate the importance of French in the world of employment. As a former French student now working for Polo Ralph Lauren in Paris explains, "My daily office routine and most of my outside appointments are almost entirely in French, and without a solid grasp of the language, I could never function on the level my job requires" (AATF 1997). A Burlington, North Carolina, buyer of fine-quality horses feels that she would be at a disadvantage with other traders if she could not communicate in French, since most of her customers in France prefer to use their own language (Romer and Head 1996). A Dallas airline executive sums up the importance of French when he tells us, "French has opened to me commercial, diplomatic, and cultural doors which would have remained closed otherwise" (AATF 1997).

But many of our younger students may not yet be seriously affected by data and details involving professional advantages, although their parents, we hope, might be. Students themselves have a huge say in the courses they sign up for, and we are kidding ourselves if we do not advertise to win them over to and keep them in French classes. How do we do that? We use every "trick of the trade" we can, because if we succeed, we are only helping our students to learn skills which enrich their knowledge and lives.

Strategic Planning and Publicity

Of course, even with all the convincing information available about the usefulness of French in business, science, and math, and even by dispelling the myth that French is harder to learn, our potential students are unlikely to stumble upon these facts on their own. This brings us to the role of French teacher as public-relations specialist.

As French teachers we must bear in mind that the primary reason cited for an increase in student enrollment in French and one of the main criteria for a successful program is the teacher's personality (AATF 1995, Koop 1995, Sims and Hammond 1981). We must make a conscious effort to publicize French and make its study appealing. If French is perceived by our students as useful and not extremely difficult but not perceived as fun, exciting, and alluring, we have only accomplished part of our goal. As teachers, we know from experience that practical reasons to study French, such as career opportunities, may attract and appeal to older or more mature students and their parents, but younger students are not nearly as impressed by such long-range benefits. French is often just one of many electives offered to students

and so must compete not only with other languages but also with electives in other subject areas as well. In order to build a strong program that includes advanced courses, we must actively recruit younger students who will continue their study of French beyond the second year, which is so often the point at which second language enrollment drops dramatically. Recruiting as many younger students as possible is of crucial importance in retaining sufficient enrollment to offer upper-level courses, whether on the high school or college level. And encouraging the establishment of FLES programs in French as an equal alternative to Spanish or other languages is a vital part of this task.

When we recruit in elementary and middle schools, it is important to establish a good working relationship with the guidance and English departments of the schools that feed into French programs. The guidance counselors and English teachers at these feeder schools are often instrumental in helping a student decide which language to study or whether to study a second language at all. The parents of potential students also have a great deal of decision-making power. When we address parents and guidance personnel (advisors at the college level), it is crucial to dispel the myth that French is more difficult than Spanish and to provide information on the usefulness of French in business and industry. The important role that language study plays in increasing success in other subject areas should also be stressed.

Recipe for Recruiting and Registering French Students

Shortly before registration for the following school year, ask for permission to place posters promoting French in the halls and classrooms of the feeder schools. Posters should also be placed in secondary schools and colleges. Some teachers use already-prepared posters to promote the study of French. Others create their own publicity, such as Romer's "One Hundred Reasons to Study French" (Romer and Head 1996), which reflects the interests of her college and larger community.

Plan to present a short program at an assembly and select the most fun and congenial students to take part. This is a commercial for the study of French and should be cast accordingly. Different levels of students should perform various parts of the program, including songs, skits, dances, and cheers. Provide song sheets and have students join in singing simple and fun French songs, such as "*Frère Jacques*" or "*Alouette*." Leave the students with something tangible, such as a ribbon, button, or sticker promoting French, and end the program with a bang, such as a lively song or cheer. At the same presentation, you may also choose to discuss plans for future trips and to show slides from previous trips, keeping in mind that trips abroad have

proven to be one of the most effective methods of raising student enthusiasm for French (AATF 1995; Sims and Hammond 1981).[10] It is extremely important to reach and recruit elementary school students early. The above-mentioned strategies are particularly effective when used with young students and can be repeated from year to year.

When registration has been completed, obtain, if possible, a copy of the projected enrollment for French and check to see if perhaps there are students who could have signed up for French but did not, and if so, find out why. Many teachers on the high school and college level, often as part of the placement process, check student and guidance records for this information. Some teachers send a letter to every incoming student or personally contact students to invite them to continue or initiate their study of French (Mohanty 1994a; Romer and Head 1996; Sims and Hammond 1981: 95).

The teachers at feeder schools can be wonderful allies for French programs. They can discuss how the study of French has been useful to them or to their former students. Similarly, enlisting your own current and former French students to recruit younger brothers, sisters, and friends can be very effective.

Upper-level high school or college students can teach basic French once a week to students at feeder schools. The upper-level students can be assigned in teams of two or three and can be required to design a lesson plan to teach the weekly objective and to create materials and visuals to use in teaching. This program can be set up as part of the course requirement for the advanced student, who receives a grade for the assignment and who gains linguistic awareness as a result of the activity. The feeder school teachers, students, and parents appreciate this opportunity for enrichment, and these younger children develop a lasting enthusiasm for the French language and are thus more likely to enroll in French when they get older.

Tips for Retaining Students

As previously mentioned, trips are a strong boost to your program. Thirty percent of respondents to the AATF survey identified trips abroad as the number-one activity that raised student enthusiasm (1995). If travel to Europe seems daunting, consider starting with easier destinations. Field trips, fairs, and festivals were named as the number-two activity for raising enthusiasm. Possibilities include outings to a French restaurant in a large city; the French Huguenot Church in Charleston, South Carolina; the Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina, for its similarity to French chateau architecture; or trips to New Orleans, Quebec, or Martinique.

Related to the above activities is the implementation of a day-long or weekend foreign language immersion camp. Of course, this is a major undertaking and is more easily accomplished when organized by a team of teachers. In cooperation with state or county parks, arrange to have students stay in cabins over a weekend. Again, enlist your upper-level high school or college students to act as counselors and develop games and activities in French. Since food-related activities were cited by twelve percent of the respondents as raising student interest, have the campers, with adult and counselor supervision, prepare some authentic French meals and snacks. Any or all of these techniques can help you establish that very important base of students to ensure your program's future success. On the college level, offering the possibility to students of having a "French table" at lunch or in a cafe or coffee house or living on a "French floor" of a dormitory or in a "French house" often increases interest. When teachers recruit at the high school level or when they consider how best to retain French students in advanced study, many of the aforementioned techniques can be effective. Assemblies or short programs, sending information to parents, and establishing rapport with guidance personnel and advisors at the college level are all important. In addition, take advantage of the opportunity to expose the student population to the French language as often as possible. Sims and Hammond (1981: vi) point out that one of the most outstanding characteristics of program success is integrating language into the fabric of school activities and life.

Plan a foreign language week in which French students perform skits, label everything in French, and make and sell French meals or snacks. Sponsor a soccer tournament with language students making up the teams. Invite guest speakers from colleges and professions to address either the entire student body or just the French students. Encourage upper-level high school and college Spanish students to pick up French as a second foreign language by emphasizing the similarities between the two languages. One simple way to do this, if you speak some Spanish, is to converse with a Spanish teacher who knows French, in French, in front of the students, and vice versa. Let them hear and see how the conversation can be conducted in both languages and can be understood, for the most part, by students of both French and Spanish. Similarly, encourage upper-level high school and college French students to begin studying Spanish, German, or another language. While this may at first seem counterproductive, the encouragement of multilingualism is a recognized strategy for increasing student enrollment in French (Walz et al. 1995a; AATF 1995), and, as an additional benefit, you will find yourself with better language students who are more linguistically aware.

The French Club can and should play an active role in touting programs. It was the third-rated activity for raising student enthusiasm (AATF 1995). In addition to helping plan and organize a foreign language week, French club members can design and build floats for homecoming, go Christmas caroling at the homes of faculty members, plan and prepare food for a faculty, counselor, or advisor tea at Christmas or other time (these last two activities are excellent for promoting good relations with colleagues), produce a "Taste of France" in a college dormitory or student center, and undertake fund-raising projects which involve the entire student body.

An example of this type of fund-raiser is a Noel-gram or Amour-gram. These are messages for Christmas or Valentine's Day which can be mass-produced on a copier. Students are offered a choice of several different messages (with translations provided) from among which they choose the message they would like delivered to their intended recipient. The French Club members assemble these messages, organize them by homeroom or other administrative division (have the sender specify this), embellish these messages with a candy cane or lollipop attached with a ribbon, and deliver them on the designated morning. The recipient's copy contains only the French message, and French Club members must wear identification pro-claiming their ability to translate the message (e.g., *Je parle français* or a small French flag). These can be sold for a nominal fee and can serve to get the student body excited about the romantic aspect of French. Sample messages include *Tu es mon cadeau préféré, Joyeux Noel et Bonne Année* for Christmas, and *Je t'aime, Sois mon Valentin*, or *Je suis fou folle de toi* for Valentine's Day. Of course, enthusiastic and industrious French Club members are indispensable for these projects.

One of the best ways to achieve retention in French programs is by explaining the rewards to be found in upper-level French classes. Students are often lured to upper-level classes with the promise of increased opportunity to study French idioms and slang (even off-color expressions). Students should be told that after they have mastered the basics of grammar, more time can be spent pursuing art, cuisine, music, games, history, literature, and other interesting topics. Of course, we should give them a taste of each of those in the beginning levels of language study as well. Many colleges have instituted interdisciplinary majors which combine study in a number of these academic areas. On the high school and college level some North Carolina teachers have created special-interest courses with enticing titles such as Elon College's "French Murder Mysteries" and "Celluloid Culture Wars: Hollywood versus Cannes," and High Point University's "Love, Honor, and Chivalry" (Romer and Head 1996).

It also helps to remind students at some point about the various benefits of language study and the fact that, although many colleges require two years of language study for admission, a number now recommend three or four years. Thus, students get the message that advanced language study can give them the edge they need in gaining admission to their preferred college or university.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers of French are faced with a multi-faceted task. We must acknowledge that the decline in student enrollment in French is due, in large part, to the perpetual misconception that French is more difficult than Spanish. We must increase our efforts to dispel this myth by talking to students, parents, and colleagues and explaining that in fact many features of French (as presented in the first part of this article) are easier for our students to assimilate than similar features of other languages. We must also address a second glaring misconception, that of French's being less useful and practical than Spanish. This misconception is best addressed through a global approach that demonstrates the importance of French in business, science, math, and technology worldwide. Finally, we must actively plan for recruitment and retention of students in French through the use of creative and aggressive strategies that have been proven to help build and maintain successful programs.

Notes

1. The authors do not wish in any way to disparage the Spanish language or the teaching or study of it; indeed, one of the authors is a devoted twenty-five year teacher of Spanish (and French). It is the wish of the authors that the decision of what language to study be based on fact, not myth or misinformation. Portions of the discussion on the relative difficulty of French and Spanish are based on the presentation by Friedrich (1996).
2. Webster's (1990) defines "myth" as "a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something, an unfounded or false notion."
3. AATF President Valdman often mentions the "Spanish problem" in his "Letter from the President" in each *National Bulletin*. Granowitz (1994a, b) suggests that all students be required to study Spanish, arguing that it is not a "foreign" language, but rather a "second" language in the United States. Mohanty (1994a) maintains that the "Spanish-is-easier" notion is erroneous. St. John recognizes the "prevailing opinion" among students that Spanish is the easiest of the three commonly studied languages: French, German, and Spanish. Williams' article is the most misleading and presents very little understanding of the difficulties of Spanish.

4 Discussed in Alice Omaggio Hadley, *Teaching Language in Context* 2nd ed. (Boston: Heinle and Heinle, 1993). Cited in Judith E. Liskin-Gasparro, *ETS Oral Proficiency Testing Manual*, Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1982.

5 Information on the histories of English, French, and Spanish can be found in Katzner (1986) and in dictionaries of the respective languages. Ranson and Carlisle (1996) discuss the similarity of English and French vocabulary.

6 Williams (1994) for instance, mentions some of the other major difficulties such as *ser* and *estar*, both meaning "to be" but each with its specific uses.

7 The AATF, along with its various Task Force committees and their Chairs, has been responsible for creating and distributing some important materials such as the brochures *Top Ten Reasons To Learn French* and *Take a Closer Look*. At least one state, North Carolina, has produced a similar brochure, *North Carolina and Foreign Languages: A Worldly Combination* (FLANC/ASLINC 1996).

8 Soci (1996) summarizes much of this information.

9 Kraemer (1995), Mohanty (1994b), and Soci (1996) list and summarize these facts.

10 In recognition of the importance of study abroad to a vibrant French program, an AATF Task Force subcommittee chaired by Sherry Dean has edited a travel guide, now available from AATF headquarters.

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Appendix

Hints on Pronunciation for Foreigners

I take it you already know
of tough and bough and cough and dough?
Others may stumble but not you,
on hiccough, thorough, laugh and through
Well done! And now you wish, perhaps,
to learn of less familiar traps?
Beware of heard, a dreadful word
that looks like beard and sounds like bird
And dead: it's said like bed, not bead
For goodness' sake don't call it 'deed'!
Watch out for meat and great and threat
(They rhyme with suite and straight and debt.)
A moth is not a moth in mother
Nor both in bother, broth in brother,
And here is not a match for there,
Nor dear and fear for bear and pear,
And then there's dose and rose and lose —
Just look them up — and goose and choose,
And cork and work and card and ward,
And font and front and word and sword
And do and go and thwart and cart —
Come, come, I've hardly made a start!
A dreadful language? Man alive!
I'd mastered it when I was five!

— TSW

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7

Small World Language and Culture for Children: FLEX and the New Standards

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In 1995 the document entitled *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* was released at the Annual Meeting of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). These Standards were developed for the teaching of foreign languages in kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) as an answer to a recognized need on the part of government, business, and educators that US students be prepared linguistically and culturally to participate in and contribute to the international economy and to a multicultural society at home and abroad. These Standards are now being implemented and reported on by the profession. The 1998 SCOLT conference is focused on presentations that address one of the five goal areas of the Standards; the 1997 ACTFL conference includes the Standards as one of the stated conference topics.

The Small World Language and Culture for Children, a K-3 FLEX program offered in Shelby County, Alabama, elementary schools over a four-year period, from 1992-1996, follows closely the newly established National Standards in philosophy, objectives, and methodology and thus provides a timely example of how a program following the standards might be implemented, and what results might be expected.

Purpose

The purpose of this article is to provide a description, analysis, and an outside evaluation of the Small World Program, focusing on the ways in which methods and materials are integrated within a developmentally appropriate format that clearly addresses the Standards and that provide a viable, teacher-tested, system-wide replicative FLEX model for teachers and administrators interested in incorporating the Standards into their programs. It is also hoped that the report will establish the timeliness and viability of the Small World Program within the context of the Standards.

General Description

In 1992, the Shelby County Board of Education received a grant from the Alabama Department of Education, under a United States Department of Education Foreign Language Assistance Act Model Program to introduce language and culture programs in K-2. The program guidelines called for the introduction of critical languages (Chinese, Japanese, Russian, etc.) in innovative formats. The funded program, Small World: Language and Culture for Small Children, was developed by the Institute of Language and Culture, a non-profit educational organization working with the University of Montevallo International/Intercultural Studies and the Shelby County elementary schools.

In developing the Small World Program, the Institute of Language and Culture had previously worked with Shelby County schools to incorporate on-going research in developmentally appropriate language acquisition and brain-based learning theories with in-class applications, to develop professional, teacher-tested curriculum guides and training materials. Drawing on the expertise of educated native Chinese, Russian, and Japanese consultants, the Institute worked closely with school administrators and teachers to devise the most appropriate ways to integrate a three-week Small World unit into school schedules. This earlier research fully supported the US Department of Education guidelines: the focus was on primary critical languages (Chinese, Russian, and Japanese) and the program was introduced in a sequential process in grades K-2 as the first step in introducing effective global perspectives into the elementary curricula.

Additionally, the proposed Small World Program was varied and innovative in approach, personalized and developmentally appropriate to ensure interest and relevance to early childhood students involved team-teaching with native-speaking assistants and classroom teachers, and conducted in a non-threatening, nurturing atmosphere within a multi-sensory environment.

The program also followed practical, well-planned procedures for introducing the language and culture into K-2 units on a county-wide scale, utilizing and enhancing available resources with teacher mentoring and pilot programs. The program also provided a large-scale, comprehensive plan focused on making a significant contribution to the development of global perspectives in Shelby County Schools.

By the end of the four year program it provided

- **student enhancement** for all Shelby County K-2 students (6,205), integrated, developmentally-appropriate introductions to Chinese, Japanese, and Russian which (1) develop abilities to empathize with people and cultures different from themselves, thus enhancing social and interpersonal skills and attitudes, (2) stimulate intellectual development, particularly in long-term second language acquisition, (3) provide opportunities for students to express themselves in a variety of creative activities and develop an aesthetic appreciation of Chinese, Japanese, and Russian arts, and (4) enlarge students' body of knowledge about the world.
- **faculty development**—200 teachers were introduced to (1) the latest methods of creating multi-sensory environments, (2) strategies for creating integrative, multi-cultural units, (3) team-teaching experiences involving native speakers from those different cultures which will provide teachers language skills and knowledge/awareness of the respective cultures.
- **curriculum development**—Each elementary school in Shelby County was provided sets of curriculum materials for Chinese, Japanese, and Russian that could also be used in elementary social sciences, thereby considerably enhancing multi-cultural resources. A significant multi-cultural dimension was added to the overall curriculum with the infusion of a developmentally significant base for enhanced learning in general, and language acquisition in particular.

Small World: Language and Culture for Small Children

Program Description

Objectives The objectives of Small World Programs are

1. to introduce Shelby County children to second-languages/cultures through holistic, stress-free experiences which accelerate intellectual development and stimulate imagination and creativity,

2. to offer children a warm and joyful early encounter with a culture other than their own that will encourage trust and stimulate interest in other peoples and cultures.
3. to establish patterns of second-language acquisition that will facilitate later language acquisition.
4. to provide opportunities for the children to develop an aesthetic appreciation of the distinctive arts of other cultures.
5. to expand the children's knowledge of the world and develop cultural sensitivities and interpersonal skills as they learn about other countries, their people, customs, and values, in relation to their own.

Methodology

The three-week Small World language/culture unit is team taught by the classroom teacher and a native-speaking language assistant. The language assistant is responsible for six one-hour Small World classes. In these classes the language assistant introduces the language/culture as a personalized experience for each child. She also introduces vocabularies and themes that the classroom teacher incorporates into other subjects creating an overall integrative, interdisciplinary unit. The classroom teacher, children, and parents also decorate the rooms and halls with appropriate posters, books, and collected realia. Music, art, and PE teachers are also asked to create projects and activities appropriate to the culture.

In presenting the second language/culture to small children, all information and materials are presented in concrete terms within the context of the children's own personal experiences. The language assistants are given extensive opportunities to interact personally with each child in presenting pillows, complimenting creative works, etc. The vocabulary, selected for its appropriateness to small children's communication, is always introduced in context. Children are given the freedom to make choices and are not corrected nor required to speak foreign words.

In the first one-hour session children are introduced to a vocabulary of 42 words which includes a basic social vocabulary, names, numbers, and a song in the target language. By the end of the complete Small World classes (6 hour), children have experienced a variety of creative activities: water colors, collages, dance, songs, etc. They have been introduced to the country's customs, and most importantly, established a trusting relationship with a person from a different culture.

Developmentally, children will have entered into different cultural symbol systems and experienced an important linguistic principle: there are different words for the same things. They will also have opportunities to

express their feelings in other languages. Also, if we accept the latest findings in brain research—that rich and nurturing learning experiences stimulate the growth of the brain—we can assume that the children not only learn, but at the same time increase their capacity to learn. Research also suggests that language acquisition is most easily accomplished in early childhood and that the ability to learn languages is considerably improved as much as fifteen years after initial second-language/culture experiences.

The Small World classes follow an integrative format that provides a sense of security within which more spontaneous, creative activities take place. The format is structured in such a way that the different learning modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.) are activated through the various activities, which are in turn timed and sequenced according to the children's interest spans.

Class Format: Chinese Model

Opening Circle

Welcome-Visuals	Introductory visuals, personalized reminiscences, photographs, information about the culture, people and customs, and an excerpt from *Big Bird in China* video—Language Assistant and Classroom teacher.
Introduction to Storybook Time	Reading *Big Book*—Classroom teacher & children •Storybook Pillows—Pillows personalized with each child's Chinese name (Language Assistant) •Storybook Journey to China—Imaginary Journey, Integrating geography, science, and culture (Classroom teacher) •Children move to Storybook Classroom area

Storybook Classroom.

Greeting	Storybook Teacher (Language Assistant) reenters, is greeted according to Chinese customs, he/she is in charge for the remainder of Storybook classroom. •Music: Chinese children's songs
Exercise	•Counting 1-10 in Chinese •Music: Chinese exercise music

Table Activity	•Introduction of theme and table activity—varies with lesson. Each activity involves creative projects appropriate to theme. Teachers move among children complimenting work, using Chinese as much as possible. •Music: Chinese children's songs, folk music backgrounds
Small World March	•March music signals end of class—Class leaders are given silk capes, panda dolls, etc.; other children are given decorated musical instruments. All are led in a *spirited* march around the room by Chinese Language Assistant, singing chorus in Chinese and vigorously playing instruments. •Music: Small World Chinese March

Closing Circle

Class	•Closing music signals time to close storybook class and go to circle. •Chinese teacher tells students good-bye; children reply: "Good-bye" and "Thank you" in Chinese. Teacher leaves
Quiet Time	•Review: Discuss what was learned in class (classroom teacher)
Return Journey	•Classroom teacher—Short return in the same manner as selected earlier •Music: quiet music: Chinese Classical Music

The Small World Program consists of six approximately one-hour core classes given twice a week for three weeks. During the three-week period, all studies are organized around the target culture including social studies, language arts, music, art. Classrooms are decorated with posters, realia, etc., appropriate to the target culture and also aesthetically pleasing and intellectually stimulating. Each class is integrated according to a particular theme.

Chinese Program Themes/Content

Class	*Theme*	*Vocabulary Activities*
1	Learning about China and Chinese Getting a Chinese Name	Rainbow Colors / Social vocabulary (hello, goodbye, thank you) Chinese Names / Numbers—Song

2	Chinese School	Calligraphy, Songs, Dance, Children's Games
3	Birthday Celebration	Food (Noodles and cakes)—Song
4	Family and Feelings	Chinese Storytime/ "I love ... (family), I am ... (happy, sad, silly, mad)"—Song
5	Nature – Chinese Art	Sun/Moon/Stars/Earth—Song/ Chinese Landscapes
6	Celebrating Chinese New Year	Review—Singing Chinese Songs/ Dragon Dance/Gifts

An Analysis of the Small World Program and the Standards for Foreign Language Learning

The philosophy, objectives, and methodology of the Small World Language and Culture Program follow closely the newly established Standards for Foreign Language Learning and marks a significant shift from the traditional emphasis on grammar and vocabulary to a new focus on communication. The Standards cite communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities as the goals of foreign language learning. Following is an analysis of the ways in which the philosophy, objectives and methods of the Small World Program address the Standards. The manner and degree to which the Small World Program achieve the above will be addressed in the evaluation that follows the analysis. Goals are addressed in the integrated, developmentally appropriate K-2 Small World Language and Culture model.

Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Philosophy and Objectives

The Standards announcement states that "Regardless of the reason for study, foreign languages have something to offer everyone," and "envisions a future in which ALL students will maintain proficiency ... in at least one other language." This inclusive philosophy can be best achieved by providing early introductory language learning experiences for all students and making these experiences appropriate for all students. This is the learning process that the Small World Program is designed to initiate, and it is designed for all students.

The Standards also state that "it is the acquisition of the ability to communicate in meaningful and appropriate ways with users of other languages that is the ultimate goal of today's foreign language classroom."

The Small World format is designed primarily to facilitate meaningful second-language communication between the students and the native-speaking teacher in a variety of culturally authentic and developmentally appropriate experiences.

Five Standards for Foreign Language Learning

The following five goals set forth in the National Standards are specifically addressed in the Small World format and methodology.

1. ***Communication: Communication in Languages Other than English***
   The Small World format provides a variety of opportunities for students to use the language on an elementary level; they engage in social interchanges with the language assistant and with others and learn to express their emotions in the second language. They understand and interpret elementary written and spoken language on a variety of topics. They also learn to write their Chinese and Japanese names and are encouraged to experiment creatively with written Japanese, Chinese, and Russian. Communication is achieved naturally and spontaneously, and children are not required to speak in the language.

2. ***Cultures: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures***
   The practices and products of the target cultures are integrated into the entire program, first with a native-speaking teacher and then in personalized cultural activities (singing, dancing, learning geography, eating, celebrating festivals and holidays, creating artwork, recognizing architectural structures, learning about economics and social institutions). This enables students not only to learn about the culture, but to experience the culture and share with others.

3. ***Connections: Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information***
   The six Small World classes are a part of a three-week unit in which the classroom teachers integrate the target language culture with all disciplines, including language arts, social studies, math, science, art, and music. Students and parents assist in gathering materials for the unit and decorating the classroom.

4. ***Comparisons: Develop Insight into the Nature of Languages and Culture***
   The contrasts between the spoken and written second-language and English provide important new insights into the nature of languages for K-2 students—that there are different words for the same things. Discussion of these and other new insights are encouraged in circle discussions. Two of the classes, those celebrating birthdays and holidays, are presented specifically in a cross-cultural context. Again, these cultural comparisons are not "taught," but "absorbed" as a part of the total experience.

5. ***Communities: Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World***
   Students are encouraged to share their new language with family members; social and family vocabularies are included specifically for that purpose. Students then share their experiences in circle discussions. Indeed, one of the most important objectives of the Small World Program is to expand the children's knowledge of the world and to develop cultural sensitivities and interpersonal skills as they learn about other countries, their people, customs, and values, in relation to their own.

The foregoing description and analysis of the Small World Program presents the purpose and objectives of the Small World Program in the context of the Standards. The effectiveness of the program and the manner and degree to which the Small World Program achieved its goals in general, and in relation to the Standards is addressed in the evaluation which follow.

Evaluation

The following evaluation of the Small World Program is based on a comprehensive collection of data made up of responses from parents, teachers, principals, and students assembled by the Institute of Language and Culture over the four-year period. The evaluation has been carried out under the direction of Dr. Rebecca Oxford of the University of Alabama.

The data include (1) a quantitative description and analysis of teacher and parent responses designed to measure cognitive results in three categories, and (2) a qualitative description and analysis of the anecdotal data designed to establish the nature and quality of the Small World experiences.

Quantitative Analysis/Description

Parents

I Positive Responses to the following questions

A Has your child spoken the language at home?
K - Chinese 91%
1 - Russian 78%
2 - Japanese 88%

B Has your child shown an increased knowledge of the culture?
K - Chinese 81%
1 - Russian 68%
2 - Japanese 84%

C Has your child shown an increased knowledge of the arts?
K - Chinese 63%
1 - Russian 55%
2 - Japanese 61%

II Analysis of general comments from parents

A K - Chinese While most parents made favorable comments, noting particularly that the program was essential in fostering global awareness, some parents felt that more time should be devoted to US history and culture

B Grade 1 - Russian Similar to the Kindergarten (Chinese), most first grade parents appreciated the increase in cultural awareness and appreciation of differences, although some thought the language too difficult and irrelevant to the core curriculum

C Grade 2 - Japanese Parents considered the program beneficial in that learning about Japanese culture helped their children to be more familiar with their own culture, and requested more information about the program so that they could reinforce learning at home

Principals

Principals agreed that the Small World K-2 programs had a positive impactive both on the respective grade levels (94%) and on the entire school (86%)

Teachers

A. K - Chinese
Language assistants were well-prepared, cooperative, and punctual; (100%) interacted well with the students (50% sure - 30% not sure - 17% no answer - no negatives). Most indicated the program had achieved its stated objectives.

B. Grade 1 - Russian
Language assistants well-prepared and cooperated well with the classroom teachers and interacted well with the children.

C. Grade 2 - Japanese
Most teachers considered the program well-designed (60%), although a large number did not respond (36%), and a few gave negative responses (4%).

The quantitative data summarized above was characterized by a high level of no responses, but very few negative responses. When provided, however, the data were essentially positive.

The evaluation instruments also called for extensive anecdotal information derived from teacher/principal observations and student responses to questions from parents. These responses are more descriptive and provide a rich source for determining the nature and quality of the Small World experiences in the following categories:

Nature and Quality of the Learning Experience

There is a positive influence on student learning, in general. Students' overall interest in learning about their own culture and language as well as others seems to be enhanced. As one classroom teacher observed, "Students are more observant of their surroundings and often try to express their appreciation through writing and art."

Students are given a new set of eyes and increased confidence through their positive experiences with other cultures. A teacher found this true in her kindergarten classroom. "The students realized that they could communicate with someone from a different country. The children loved speaking."

Disadvantaged, slower, or introverted learners are given opportunities to succeed in the non-traditional Small World language/culture classes where students have no prior knowledge and everyone is able to participate, succeed, and enjoy the learning experience on an even playing field. Several teachers remarked on this unexpected phenomenon. "A special ed student with very limited cognitive abilities continued all year to say *zhi jen* at the end of the day.

All children continued to use Chinese vocabulary in natural ways (thank you, etc.)."

Students develop a "desire to know" that reaches far beyond the limited acquisition of knowledge which is frequently what parents are looking for. Their increased interest in learning fosters self-direction and independence in the students, encouraging life-long interest and learning. As one kindergarten teacher commented, "I was surprised at how much they enjoyed the Chinese art slide we watched.... I don't think many of them would hesitate to engage a Chinese person in conversation. The students became very aware of Chinese people on TV and in places they would go. They became very aware of the presence of Chinese people and were thrilled to see them at Wal-Mart, etc."

Students seemed to develop a readiness to study other new languages and cultures on a long-term basis. This classroom teacher observed such a readiness, "My students loved using the vocabulary in whatever they were doing—centers, having lunch, on the playground, etc. They continued to use it for the rest of the year." A mother commented "I believe it gave [my son] an excitement for learning other languages."

Students learn about their own culture/language through this program. One teacher expressed her views in this way, "The Small World class was a positive learning experience for the students. They actually retained more than I anticipated. The students couldn't wait until each lesson. They were really sorry to see it end. I believe that through the activities and videos they were able to be a part of a different culture. They loved the dragon dance. Afterwards, the children said they wished America had a dragon dance."

Nature and Quality of Inter-Personal Growth and Cultural Awareness

Teachers involved with the Small World Program give accounts of students' personal growth in the period of time given (three weeks). Student behaviors of laughing at and making fun of cultural differences are replaced with acceptance and reservations to express contempt, there is a desire to learn more. Students have also been observed informing other students of differences (discouraging ridicule and laughter). One classroom teacher who taught Russian seemed pleased to find this to be true in her classroom, "The boys and girls began saying 'That's different from us' instead of laughing or making fun of the language, writing, etc." Another teacher observed: "I think my students have a better understanding about other people. People are different. Several times they corrected other children laughing (at food the

Chinese ate). They gained the feeling that just because it's different and they did not do it, it wasn't necessarily wrong."

Some teachers have also observed an increase in communication and interaction among students, between students and parents, and students and teachers due to the students' newly gained knowledge and desire to share this new knowledge. Moreover, student self-esteem is also seemingly enhanced as they become experts in their new field of study and share new knowledge. One classroom teacher commented, "I enjoyed watching my class feel really good about themselves as they taught others (parents, siblings, peers) to use the Chinese language. Even my lowest academically picked up the language."

Learning about other cultures allows the fear and uncertainty about differences among students to be reduced. As students better learn to respect, appreciate, and honor differences with cultures outside of the US, they gain tools to respect, appreciate, and honor cultures within the US (i.e., racial differences, abilities, socio-economic levels, gender, religious beliefs, regional differences, learning styles). This understanding may be an alternative means of dealing with differences. Rather than dealing with differences through violence, communication is encouraged, because fear/anger is reduced. This very observation was made by a classroom teacher. "They loved the Chinese teacher. This gave them the opportunity to realize everyone is different. It is okay to be different."

The Small World program allows students to have a positive experience with the diversity of another culture. They do not simply learn about another culture, they interface with that culture through meaningful interactions with a person from that culture. Children may also come to understand that there are differences in people. A classroom teacher observed, "They seemed to accept and love our Chinese teacher and enjoyed learning about her family and customs. At first she was funny and different to the students, but by the end, she was a person they really liked." Another teacher observed that the best thing about the program is "the relationship that the children build with the person of another culture—learning that basically all people are the same inside, while being different on the outside."

The indisputable success of the Small World Program, as measured by the comprehensive evaluation data provided by the Institute of Language and Culture, clearly establishes the viability of the Small World Program as a teacher-tested, system-wide replicable FLEX model. Furthermore, there is compelling evidence of its effectiveness when one recognizes how closely the evaluations reflect four of the five Cs of the Standards.

1. **Communication**

   The anecdotal responses of both teachers and parents amply attest to the various ways in which students, even at an elementary level, would engage in spontaneous communication in the new language. They could understand written words and engage in social interactions. For instance, one mother described the way her daughter was so anxious to share her Russian class that she "sang a song ... told us what Russian children called grandmother — 'babushka' ... she was so interested in the Russian words, she wanted to teach them to me, also."

2. **Culture**

   Teachers reported many ways in which students demonstrated a cultural awareness of the practices and perceptions of the different cultures. For example, in a second grade Japanese class, "The students continually tried to pattern their behaviors in class like the children in Japan, ... and tried to express their appreciation for the beauty of flower arrangements and gardens."

3. **Connections**

   Teachers often referred to the integration of the Small World experiences into the regular curriculum throughout the three-week Small World unit. "In language arts, children kept a journal. After each lesson children were encouraged to write and draw a picture of their experience. They loved to share this." Other teachers told of using the numbers to count in math and making a calendar with Japanese numbers. Science projects conducted during the Japanese unit included making volcanoes and studying waves.

4. **Communities**

   The personal anecdotes of parents describing their children's responses to the classes outside of the classroom are the most numerous and engaging. The two following anecdotes from kindergarten parents most effectively demonstrate the degree to which students achieved the goals set forth in this standard, which focuses on children making their learning personal and part of everyday life, "using language both within and beyond the school setting" (5.1 and 5.2).

   > He counted in Chinese (to five) and would use the Chinese word for objects in context. Sang Happy Birthday in Chinese to his grandmother at her 70th birthday party. Spoke in Chinese to waiters in Chinese restaurant (thank you, please, etc.). In fact, last week we ran into a Chinese family in the

> grocery store and my son tried to speak to them in their native language! I was most impressed and they seemed quite charmed by his attempt to find words in common

Another parent described her son's response:

> He stated he knew a whole lot of things about China. He made a Chinese bulletin board in his room. He did a presentation for his family at home telling us all about China and showing us all the things he had made ... we were so pleased to see all he had learned and how excited he was about it that we videotaped him telling us about everything.

In summary, it should be noted that the evaluations were not 100% positive: teachers expressed a need for more training, some complained of lack of time and had reservations about some of the activities, and principals were uncomfortable with those parental objections that "the languages were too difficult and irrelevant to the core curriculum" and "more time needed to be dedicated to US culture and history!" These negative responses, however, were few, and the evaluations overall reflected an overwhelmingly positive response from its participants on several levels. Generally, principals, language assistants, teachers, and parents of students participating in the program voiced their support of the program and their desire for the program to continue.

The possible effectiveness of a program that consists of only six hours of "instruction" also needs to be addressed. It should be pointed out that rather than "instruction" provided by a teacher in one-hour weekly classes which might total 50 hours over a year, the three-week Small World Language/Culture unit provides upward to 90 hours in an integrated immersion-type unit in which children learn—or rather "experience" the language/culture on many levels; the experiences of the six one-hour core classes are expanded across the curriculum by the classroom teachers and the art/music/PE teachers—and indeed, as the evaluations indicate, even into after-school family experiences.

Also, if one considers the nature and quality of the Small World experience which provides children first-hand opportunities for positive, nurturing personal contacts with persons of different cultures, and the results in cultural awareness and language acquisition indicated in the evaluations, the three-week Small World unit seems to be an remarkably effective FLEX program that provides a solid basis for future growth in interpersonal sensitivities as well as language acquisition.

However, a more extensive evaluation of the long-term impact of these early experiences is necessary to assess the value of the program fully. This evaluation will be possible in the Shelby County schools as students having the K-2 introductions in Chinese, Russian, and Japanese move into the upper levels and comparative studies of attitudes, values, knowledge, and interest in other countries can be more accurately measured. When the evaluation projects are completed, we have every confidence that the Small World Program will emerge as an innovative, practical model for incorporating the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* into existing programs directed toward achieving the goals set by that document.

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